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ESSAYS

ON THE

NATURE AND PRINCIPLES

OF

TASTE.

BY

ARCHIBALD ALISON, LL. B.

F. R. S. LONDON AND EDINBURGH,

PREBENDARY OF SARUM,

&c. &c. &c.

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ESSAYS, &c.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE first Edition of this Work was published in the year 1790. After so long an interval, I should not have presumed again to present it to the public, if I had not been informed by my booksellers, that some wish had lately been expressed for a Second Edition. In preparing it for the press, I have thought it my duty to add a few observations on the Origin of the Beauty and Sublimity of the Human Countenance and Form, to complete the Second Essay.

Of the general plan which I have sketched in the Introduction, I lament to think that so little has been accomplished; and still more, that the progress of years, and

the increase of more serious duties, render me still less able to accomplish the original design I had formed.

Yet, if the public should express any wish to see these Inquiries concluded, I shall be proud to feel myself under the obligation of attempting, at least, to obey it.

ARCHIBALD ALISON.

TO

DUGALD STEWART, ESQ.

IN WHOSE FRIENDSHIP

THE AUTHOR HAS FOUND THE HONOUR,

AND THE HAPPINESS OF HIS LIFE;

THESE ESSAYS

ARE

MOST RESPECTFULLY

AND AFFECTIONATELY

INSCRIBED.

EDINBURGH,
November 22, 1810.

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INTRODUCTION.

TASTE is, in general, considered as that Faculty of the Human Mind, by which we perceive and enjoy whatever is BEAUTIFUL or SUBLIME in the works of Nature or Art.

The perception of these qualities is attended with an Emotion of Pleasure, very distinguishable from every other pleasure of our Nature, and which is accordingly distinguished by the name of the EMOTION of TASTE. The distinction of the objects of Taste into the Sublime and the Beautiful, has produced a similar division of this Emotion, into the EMOTION of SUBLIMITY, and the EMOTION of BEAUTY.

The Qualities that produce these Emotions, are to be found in almost every class of the objects of human knowledge, and the Emotions themselves afford one of the most extensive sources of human delight. They occur to us, amid every variety of EXTERNAL Scenery, and among many diversities of disposition and affection in the MIND of Man. The most pleasing Arts of human invention are altogether directed to their pursuit: And even the necessary Arts are exalted into dignity, by the Genius that can unite Beauty with use. From the earliest period of Society, to its last stage of improvement, they afford an innocent and elegant amusement to private life, at the same time that they increase the Splendour of National Character; and in the progress of Nations, as well as of Individuals, while they attract attention from the pleasures they bestow, they serve to exalt the human Mind, from corporeal to intellectual pursuits.

These Qualities, however, though so important to human happiness, are not the objects of immediate observation; and in the attempt to investigate them, various circumstances unite to perplex our research. They are often obscured under the number of qualities with which they are accidentally combined: They result often from peculiar combinations of the qualities of objects, or the relation of certain parts of objects to each other: They are still oftener, perhaps, dependent upon the state of our own minds, and vary in their effects with the dispositions in which they happen to be observed. In all cases, while we feel the Emotions they excite, we are ignorant of the causes by which they are produced; and when we seek to discover them, we have no other method of discovery, than that varied and patient EXPERIMENT, by which, amid these complicated circumstances, we may gradually ascertain the peculiar qualities which, by the CONSTITUTION of our NATURE, are

permanently connected with the Emotion we feel.

In the employment of this mode of investigation, there are two great objects of attention and inquiry, which seem to include all that is either necessary, or perhaps possible, for us to discover on the subject of Taste.

These objects are,

I. To investigate the NATURE of those QUALITIES that produce the Emotions of TASTE: And,

II. To investigate the NATURE of that FACULTY, by which these Emotions are received.

These investigations, however, are not to be considered only as objects of philosophical curiosity. They have an immediate relation to all the Arts that are directed to the production either of the BEAUTIFUL or the SUBLIME; and they afford the only means by which the principles of these various arts can be ascertained. Without a

just and accurate conception of the Nature of these Qualities, the ARTIST must be unable to determine, whether the Beauty he creates is temporary or permanent, whether adapted to the accidental prejudices of his Age, or to the uniform constitution of the human Mind; and whatever the Science of CRITICISM can afford for the improvement or correction of Taste, must altogether depend upon the previous knowledge of the Nature and Laws of this Faculty.

To both these Inquiries, however, there is a preliminary investigation, which seems absolutely necessary, and without which every conclusion we form, must be either imperfect or vague. In the investigation of CAUSES, the first and most important step, is the accurate examination of the EFFECT to be explained. In the Science of Mind, however, as well as in that of Body, there are few effects altogether simple, or in which accidental circumstances are not combined with the proper effect. Unless, there-

fore, by means of repeated Experiments, such accidental circumstances are accurately distinguished from the phenomena that permanently characterize the effect, we are under the necessity of including in the Cause, the causes also of all the accidental circumstances with which the effect is accompanied.

With the Emotions of TASTE, in almost every instance, many other accidental Emotions of Pleasure are united: the various simple pleasures that arise from other qualities of the object; the pleasure of agreeable Sensation, in the case of Material objects; and in all, that pleasure which by the Constitution of our Nature is annexed to the Exercise of our Faculties. Unless, therefore, we have previously acquired a distinct and accurate conception of that *peculiar* effect which is produced on our Minds, when the Emotions of Taste are felt, and can precisely distinguish it from the effects that are produced by these acci-

dental Qualities, we must necessarily include in the Causes of such Emotions, those Qualities also, which are the causes of the accidental pleasures with which this Emotion is accompanied. The variety of Systems that Philosophers have adopted upon this subject, and the various Emotions into which they have resolved the Emotion of Taste, while they afford a sufficient evidence of the numerous accidental pleasures that accompany these Emotions, afford also a strong illustration of the necessity of previously ascertaining the Nature of this Effect, before we attempt to investigate its Cause. With regard, therefore, to both these Inquiries, the first and most important step is accurately to examine the Nature of this EMOTION itself, and its distinction from every other Emotion of Pleasure; and our capacity of discovering either the Nature of the Qualities that produce the Emotions of Taste, or the Nature of the Faculty by which they are received, will be exactly

proportioned to our accuracy in ascertaining the Nature of the Emotion itself.

When we look back to the history of these investigations, and to the Theories which have been so liberally formed upon the subject, there is one fact that must necessarily strike us, *viz.* That all these Theories have uniformly taken for granted the *Simplicity* of this Emotion; that they have considered it as an Emotion too plain, and too commonly felt, to admit of any Analysis; that they have as uniformly, therefore, referred it to some *one* Principle or Law of the Human Mind; and that they have therefore concluded, that the Discovery of that *one* Principle was the essential key by which all the Pleasures of Taste were to be resolved.

While they have assumed this fundamental Principle, the various Theories of Philosophers may, and indeed must, be included in the two following Classes of Supposition.

I. The first class is that which resolves the Emotion of Taste directly into an original Law of our Nature, which supposes a Sense, or Senses, by which the qualities of Beauty and Sublimity are perceived and felt, as their appropriate objects; and concludes, therefore, that the genuine object of the Arts of Taste, is to discover, and to imitate those Qualities in every Subject, which the prescription of Nature has thus made essentially either beautiful or sublime.

To this first class of Hypotheses belong almost all the Theories of Music, of Architecture, and of Sculpture, the theory of Mr Hogarth, of the Abbé Winkelman, and perhaps, in its last result, also the theory of Sir Joshua Reynolds. It is the species of Hypothesis which is naturally resorted to by all Artists and Amateurs,—by those, whose habits of Thought lead them to attend more to the Causes of their Emotions, than to the Nature of the Emotions themselves.

II. The second Class of Hypotheses arises

from the opposite View of the Subject. It is that which resists the idea of any new or peculiar Sense, distinct from the common principles of our Nature; which supposes some *one* known and acknowledged Principle or Affection of Mind, to be the foundation of all the Emotions we receive from the Objects of Taste, and which resolves, therefore, all the various Phenomena into some more general Law of our intellectual or moral Constitution. Of this kind are the Hypotheses of M. Diderot, who attributes all our Emotions of this kind to the perception of Relation; of Mr Hume, who resolves them into our Sense of Utility; of the venerable St Austin, who, with nobler views, a thousand years ago, resolved them into the pleasure which belongs to the perception of Order and Design, &c. It is the species of Hypothesis most natural to retired and philosophic Minds; to those, whose habits have led them to attend more to the Nature

of the Emotions they felt, than to the Causes which produced them.

If the success of these long and varied Inquiries has not corresponded to the Genius or the industry of the Philosophers who have pursued them, a suspicion may arise that there has been something faulty in the principle of their investigation: and that some fundamental assumption has been made, which ought first to have been patiently and securely ascertained. It was this suspicion that first led to the following Inquiries: It seemed to me that the SIMPLICITY OF THE EMOTION OF TASTE, was a Principle much too hastily adopted; and that the consequences which followed from it (under both these Classes of Hypotheses), were very little reconcileable with the most common experience of Human Feeling; and from the examination of this preliminary Question, I was led gradually to conclusions which seemed not only to me, but to others, whose opinion I value far more than

my own, of an importance not unworthy being presented to the public. In doing this, I am conscious that I have entered upon a new and untrodden path: and I feel all my own weakness in pursuing it: yet I trust my Readers will believe, that I should not have pursued it so long, if I were not convinced that it would finally terminate in views not only important to the Arts of Taste, but important also to the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

The Inquiries which follow naturally divide themselves into the following Parts; and are to be prosecuted in the following order:

1. I shall begin with an ANALYSIS of the EFFECT which is produced upon the Mind, when the Emotions of Beauty or Sublimity are felt. I shall endeavour to shew, that this effect is very different from the determination of a SENSE; that it is not in fact a Simple, but a Complex Emotion; that it involves in all cases, 1*st*, the production of

some Simple Emotion, or the exercise of some moral Affection; and *2dly*, the consequent Excitement of a peculiar Exercise of the Imagination; that these concomitant effects are distinguishable, and very often distinguished in our experience; and that the *peculiar* pleasure of the BEAUTIFUL or the SUBLIME is only felt when these two effects are conjoined, and the Complex Emotion produced.

The prosecution of the Subject will lead to another Inquiry of some difficulty and extent, *viz.* into the origin of the Beauty and Sublimity of the Qualities of MATTER. To this subordinate Inquiry I shall devote a separate Essay. I shall endeavour to shew that all the Phenomena are reducible to the same general Principle, and that the Qualities of Matter are not beautiful or sublime in themselves, but as they are, by various means, the Signs or Expressions of Qualities capable of producing Emotion.

II. From this Examination of the EFFECT I shall proceed, in the SECOND PART, to investigate the CAUSES which are productive of it; or, in other words, the Sources of the Beautiful and the Sublime in Nature and Art.

In the course of this investigation I shall endeavour to shew, 1*st*, That there is no single emotion into which these varied effects can be resolved; that on the contrary, every simple emotion, and therefore every object which is capable of producing any simple emotion, *may* be the foundation of the complex emotion of Beauty or Sublimity. But, *in the second place*, that this complex emotion of Beauty or Sublimity is never produced, unless, beside the excitement of some simple emotion, the imagination also is excited, and the exercise of the two faculties combined in the general effect. The prosecution of the subject, will lead me to the *principal object of the inquiry*, to shew what is that LAW of MIND, accord-

ing to which, in actual life, this exercise or employment of imagination is excited; and what are the means by which, in the different Fine Arts, the artist is able to awaken this important exercise of imagination, and to exalt objects of simple and common pleasure, into objects of Beauty or Sublimity.

In this part of the subject, there are two subordinate inquiries which will necessarily demand attention.

1. The Qualities of Sublimity and Beauty, are discovered not only in pleasing or agreeable subjects, but frequently also in objects that are in themselves productive of PAIN; and some of the noblest productions of the Fine Arts are founded upon subjects of TERROR and DISTRESS. It will form, therefore, an obvious and important inquiry, to ascertain by what means this singular effect is produced in REAL NATURE, and by what means it may be produced in the Compositions of ART.

2. There is a distinction in the effects

produced upon our minds by objects of Taste, and this distinction, both in the EMOTIONS and their CAUSES, has been expressed by the terms of SUBLIMITY and BEAUTY. It will form, therefore, a second object of inquiry to ascertain THE NATURE OF THIS DISTINCTION, both with regard to these emotions and to the qualities that produce them.

III. From the preceding inquiries I shall proceed, in the LAST PART, to investigate the NATURE of that Faculty by which these emotions are perceived and felt. I shall endeavour to shew, that it has no resemblance to a sense; that as, whenever it is employed, two distinct and independent Powers of Mind are employed, it is not to be considered as a separate and peculiar faculty, and that it is finally to be resolved into more general Principles of our constitution. These speculations will probably lead to the important inquiry, whether there is any STANDARD by which the per-

fection or imperfection of our sentiments upon these subjects may be determined; to some explanation of the means by which Taste may be corrected or improved; and to some illustration of the PURPOSES which this peculiar constitution of our nature serves, in the increase of human HAPPINESS, and the exaltation of human CHARACTER.

I feel it incumbent on me, however, to inform my Readers, that I am to employ, in these inquiries, a different kind of evidence from what has usually been employed by writers upon these subjects, and that my illustrations will be derived, much less from the compositions of the Fine Arts than from the appearances of common nature, and the experience of common men. If the Fine Arts are in reality arts of imitation, their Principles are to be sought for in the subject which they imitate; and it is ever to be remembered, "That Music, Ar-"chitecture, and Painting, as well as Poe-

" try and Oratory, are to deduce their laws " and rules from the general Sense and Taste " of mankind, and not from the principles " of these Arts themselves: in other words, " that the Taste is not to conform to the " Art, but the Art to the Taste *." In following this mode of illustration, while I am sensible that I render my book less amusing, I trust I may render it more useful. The most effectual method to check the empiricism, either of Art or of Science, is to multiply, as far as possible, the number of those who can observe, and judge; and (whatever may be the conclusions of my readers with regard to my own particular opinions,) I shall not have occupied their attention in vain, if I can lead them to think and to feel for themselves; to employ the powers which are given them to the ends for which they were given; and, upon subjects where all men are entitled to judge, to dis-

* Mr Addison.

regard alike the abstract refinements of the Philosopher who speculates in the closet, and the technical doctrines of the Artist who dictates in the school.

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ESSAY I.

ON THE

NATURE OF THE EMOTIONS

OF

SUBLIMITY AND BEAUTY.

ESSAY I.

ON THE NATURE OF THE EMOTIONS OF SUBLIMITY AND BEAUTY.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Effect produced upon the Imagination by Objects of Sublimity and Beauty.

SECTION I.

THE Emotions of Sublimity and Beauty are uniformly ascribed, both in popular and in philosophical language, to the Imagination. The fine arts are considered as the arts which are addressed to the imagination, and the pleasures they afford are described, by way of distinction, as the Pleasures

of the Imagination. The nature of any person's taste, is, in common life, generally determined by the nature or character of his imagination, and the expression of any deficiency in this power of mind, is considered as synonymous with the expression of a similar deficiency in point of taste.

Although, however, this connection is so generally acknowledged, it is not perhaps as generally understood in what it consists, or what is the nature of that effect which is produced upon the imagination by objects of sublimity and beauty. I shall endeavour, therefore, in the first place, to state what seems to me the nature of this EFFECT, or, in what that exercise of imagination consists, which is so generally supposed to take place, when these emotions are felt.

When any object, either of sublimity or beauty, is presented to the mind, I believe every man is conscious of a train of thought being immediately awakened in his imagination, analogous to the character or ex-

pression of the original object. The simple perception of the object, we frequently find, is insufficient to excite these emotions, unless it is accompanied with this operation of mind, unless, according to common expression, our imagination is seized, and our fancy busied in the pursuit of all those trains of thought which are allied to this character or expression.

Thus, when we feel either the beauty or sublimity of natural scenery,—the gay lustre of a morning in spring, or the mild radiance of a summer evening, the savage majesty of a wintry storm, or the wild magnificence of a tempestuous ocean,—we are conscious of a variety of images in our minds, very different from those which the objects themselves can present to the eye. Trains of pleasing or of solemn thought arise spontaneously within our minds; our hearts swell with emotions, of which the objects before us seem to afford no adequate cause; and we are never so much satiated with delight, as

when, in recalling our attention, we are unable to trace either the progress or the connection of those thoughts, which have passed with so much rapidity through our imagination.

The effect of the different arts of taste is similar. The landscapes of Claude Lorraine, the music of Handel, the poetry of Milton, excite feeble emotions in our minds when our attention is confined to the qualities they present to our senses, or when it is to such qualities of their composition that we turn our regard. It is then, only, we feel the sublimity or beauty of their productions, when our imaginations are kindled by their power, when we lose ourselves amid the number of images that pass before our minds, and when we waken at last from this play of fancy, as from the charm of a romantic dream. The beautiful apostrophe of the Abbé de Lille upon the subject of gardening,

N'avez-vous pas souvent, au lieux infrequentés,
Rencontré tout-à-coup, ces aspects enchantés,
Qui suspendent vos pas, dont l'image chérie
Vous jette en une douce et longue réverie?

is equally applicable to every other composition of taste; and in the production of such trains of thought, seems to consist the effect which objects of sublimity and beauty have upon the imagination.

For the truth of this observation itself, I must finally appeal to the consciousness of the reader; but there are some very familiar considerations, which it may be useful to suggest, that seem very strongly to shew the connection between this exercise of imagination, and the existence of the emotions of sublimity or beauty.

SECTION II.

THAT unless this exercise of imagination is excited, the emotions of Beauty or Sublimity are unfelt, seems capable of illustration, from many instances of a very familiar kind.

I.

If the mind is in such a state as to prevent this freedom of imagination, the emotion, whether of sublimity or beauty, is unperceived. In so far as the beauties of art or nature affect the external senses, their effect is the same upon every man who is in possession of these senses. But to a man in pain or in grief, whose mind, by these means, is attentive only to one object or consideration; the same scene, or the same form, will produce no feeling of admiration, which, at other times, when his

imagination was at liberty, would have produced it in its fullest perfection. Whatever is great or beautiful in the scenery of external nature, is almost constantly before us; and not a day passes, without presenting us with appearances, fitted both to charm and to elevate our minds; yet it is in general with a heedless eye that we regard them, and only in particular moments that we are sensible of their power. There is no man, for instance, who has not felt the beauty of sunset; yet every one can remember many instances, when this most striking scene had no effect at all upon his imagination; and when he has beheld all the magnificence with which nature generally distinguishes the close of day, without one sentiment of admiration or delight.—There are times, in the same manner, when we can read the Georgics, or the Seasons, with perfect indifference, and with no more emotion, than what we feel from the most uninteresting composition in prose; while

in other moments, the first lines we meet with take possession of our imagination, and awaken it in such innumerable trains of imagery, as almost leave the fancy of the poet behind. In these, and similar cases of difference in our feelings, from the same objects, it will always be found, that the difference arises from the state of our imaginations; from our disposition to follow out the train of thought which such objects naturally produce, or our incapacity to do it, from some other idea, which has at that time taken possession of our minds, and renders us unable to attend to any thing else. That state of mind, every man must have felt, is most favourable to the emotions of taste, in which the imagination is free and unembarrassed, or, in which the attention is so little occupied by any private or particular object of thought, as to leave us open to all the impressions, which the objects that are before us can produce. It is upon the vacant and the unemployed,

accordingly, that the objects of taste make the strongest impression. It is in such hours alone, that we turn to the compositions of music, or of poetry, for amusement. The seasons of care, of grief, or of business, have other occupations, and destroy, for the time at least, our sensibility to the beautiful or the sublime, in the same proportion that they produce a state of mind unfavourable to the indulgence of imagination.

II.

The same thing is observable in criticism. When we sit down to appreciate the value of a poem, or of a painting, and attend minutely to the language or composition of the one, or to the colouring or design of the other, we feel no longer the delight which they at first produce. Our imagination in this employment is restrained, and, instead of yielding to its suggestions, we studiously endeavour to resist them, by fixing our attention upon minute and partial circum-

stances of the composition. How much this operation of mind tends to diminish our sense of its beauty, every one will feel, who attends to his own thoughts on such an occasion, or who will recollect how different was his state of mind, when he first felt the beauty either of the painting or the poem. It is this, chiefly, which makes it so difficult for young people, possessed of imagination, to judge of the merits of any poem or fable, and which induces them so often to give their approbation to compositions of little value. It is not that they are incapable of learning in what the merits of such compositions consist, for these principles of judgment are neither numerous nor abstruse. It is not that greater experience produces greater sensibility, for this everything contradicts; but it is, because everything, in that period of life, is able to excite their imaginations, and to move their hearts, because they judge of the composition, not by its merits, when compared with other works, or by its ap-

proach to any abstract or ideal standard, but by its effect in agitating their imaginations, and leading them into that fairy land, in which the fancy of youth has so much delight to wander. It is their own imagination which has the charm, which they attribute to the work that excites it; and the simplest tale, or the poorest novel, is, at that time, as capable of awakening it, as afterwards the eloquence of Virgil or Rousseau. All this, however, all this flow of imagination, in which youth and men of sensibility are so apt to indulge, and which so often brings them pleasure at the expence of their taste, the labour of criticism destroys. The mind, in such an employment, instead of being at liberty to follow whatever trains of imagery the composition before it can excite, is either fettered to the consideration of some of its minute and solitary parts; or pauses amid the rapidity of its conceptions, to make them the objects of its attention and review. In these operations, accord-

ingly, the emotion, whether of beauty or sublimity, is lost, and if it is wished to be recalled, it can only be done by relaxing this vigour of attention, and resigning ourselves again to the natural stream of our thoughts. The mathematician who investigates the demonstrations of the Newtonian philosophy, the painter who studies the designs of Raphael, the poet who reasons upon the measure of Milton, all, in such occupations, lose the delight which these several productions can give; and when they are willing to recover their emotion, must withdraw their attention from those minute considerations, and leave their fancy to expatiate at will, amid all the great or pleasing conceptions, which such productions of genius can raise.

III.

The effect which is thus produced upon the mind by temporary exertions of attention, is also more permanently produced by the difference of original character; and the

degree in which the emotions of sublimity or beauty are felt, is in general proportioned to the prevalence of those relations of thought in the mind, upon which this exercise of imagination depends. The principal relation which seems to take place in those trains of thought that are produced by objects of taste, is that of resemblance; the relation, of all others, the most loose and general, and which affords the greatest range of thought for our imagination to pursue. Wherever, accordingly, these emotions are felt, it will be found, not only that this is the relation which principally prevails among our ideas, but that the emotion itself is proportioned to the degree in which it prevails.

In the effect which is produced upon our minds, by the different appearances of Natural scenery, it is easy to trace this progress of resembling thought, and to observe, how faithfully the conceptions which arise in our imaginations, correspond to the impressions which the characters of these seasons pro-

duce. What, for instance, is the impression we feel from the scenery of spring? The soft and gentle green with which the earth is spread, the feeble texture of the plants and flowers, the young of animals just entering into life, and the remains of winter yet lingering among the woods and hills,—all conspire to infuse into our minds somewhat of that fearful tenderness with which infancy is usually beheld. With such a sentiment, how innumerable are the ideas which present themselves to our imagination! ideas, it is apparent, by no means confined to the scene before our eyes, or to the possible desolation which may yet await its infant beauty, but which almost involuntarily extend themselves to analogies with the life of man, and bring before us all those images of hope or fear, which, according to our peculiar situations, have the dominion of our heart!—The beauty of autumn is accompanied with a similar exercise of thought: the leaves begin then to drop from the trees;

the flowers and shrubs, with which the fields were adorned in the summer months, decay; the woods and groves are silent; the sun himself seems gradually to withdraw his light, or to become enfeebled in his power. Who is there, who, at this season, does not feel his mind impressed with a sentiment of melancholy? or who is able to resist that current of thought, which, from such appearances of decay, so naturally leads him to the solemn imagination of that inevitable fate, which is to bring on alike the decay of life, of empire, and of nature itself? In such cases of emotion, every man must have felt, that the character of the scene is no sooner impressed upon his mind, than various trains of correspondent imagery rise before his imagination; that whatever may be the nature of the impression, the general tone of his thoughts partakes of this nature or character; and that his delight is proportioned to the degree in which this uniformity of character prevails.

The same effect, however, is not produced upon all men. There are many, whom the prospect of such appearances in nature excites to no exercise of fancy whatever; who, by their original constitution, are more disposed to the employment of attention, than of imagination; and who, in the objects that are presented to them, are more apt to observe their individual and distinguishing qualities, than those by which they are related to other objects of their knowledge. Upon the minds of such men, the relation of resemblance has little power; the efforts of their imagination, accordingly, are either feeble or slow; and the general character of their understandings is that of steady and precise, rather than that of enlarged and extensive thought. It is, I believe, consistent with general experience, that men of this description are little sensible to the emotions of sublimity or beauty; and they, who have attended to the language of such men, when objects of this kind have been presented to

them, must have perceived that the emotion they felt, was no greater than what they themselves have experienced in those cases, where they have exerted a similar degree of attention, or when any other cause has restrained the usual exercise of their imagination. To the qualities which are productive of simple emotion, to the useful, the agreeable, the fitting, or the convenient in objects, they have the same sensibility with other men; but of the superior and more complex emotion of beauty, they seem to be either altogether unconscious, or to share in it only in proportion to the degree in which they can relax this severity of attention, and yield to the relation of resembling thought.

It is in the same manner, that the progress of life generally takes from men their sensibility to the objects of taste. The season in which these are felt in their fullest degree is in youth, when, according to common expression, the imagination is warm,

or, in other words, when it is easily excited to that exertion upon which so much of the emotion of beauty depends. The business of life, in the greatest part of mankind, and the habits of more accurate thought, which are acquired by the few who reason and reflect, tend equally to produce in both, a stricter relation in the train of their thoughts, and greater attention to the objects of their consideration, than can either be expected, or can happen in youth. They become, by these means, not only less easily led to any exercise of imagination, but their associations become at the same time less consistent with the employment of it. The man of business, who has passed his life in studying the means of accumulating wealth, and the philosopher, whose years have been employed in the investigation of causes, have both not only acquired a constitution of mind very little fitted for the indulgence of imagination, but have acquired also associations of a very different kind from those

which take place when imagination is employed. In the first of these characters, the prospect of any beautiful scene in nature would induce no other idea than that of its value. In the other, it would lead only to speculations upon the causes of the beauty that was ascribed to it. In both, it would thus excite ideas, which could be the foundation of no exercise of imagination, because they required thought and attention. To a young mind, on the contrary, possessed of any sensibility, how many pleasing ideas would not such a prospect afford? ideas of peace, and innocence, and rural joy, and all the unblemished delights of solitude and contemplation. In such trains of imagery, no labour of thought, or habits of attention, are required; they rise spontaneously in the mind, upon the prospect of any object to which they bear the slightest resemblance, and they lead it almost insensibly along, in a kind of bewitching reverie, through all its store of pleasing or interest-

ing conceptions. To the philosopher, or the man of business, the emotion of beauty, from such a scene, would be but feebly known; but by the young mind, which had such sensibility, it would be felt in all its warmth, and would produce an emotion of delight, which not only would be little comprehended by men of a severer or more thoughtful character, but which seems also to be very little dependent upon the object which excites it, and to be derived, in a great measure, from this exercise of mind itself.

In these familiar instances, it is obvious how much the emotions of taste are connected with this state or character of imagination; and how much those habits or employments of mind, which demand attention, or which limit it to the consideration of single objects, tend to diminish the sensibility of mankind to the emotions of sublimity or beauty.

SECTION III.

THERE are many other instances equally familiar, which are sufficient to shew, that whatever increases this exercise or employment of Imagination, increases also the Emotion of beauty or sublimity.

I.

This is very obviously the effect of all Associations. There is no man who has not some interesting associations with particular scenes, or airs, or books, and who does not feel their beauty or sublimity enhanced to him by such connections. The view of the house where one was born, of the school where one was educated, and where the gay years of infancy were passed, is indifferent to no man. They recall so many images of past happiness and past affections, they are connected with so many

strong or interesting emotions, and lead altogether to so long a train of feelings and recollections, that there is hardly any scene which one ever beholds with so much rapture. There are songs also, that we have heard in our infancy, which, when brought to our remembrance in after years, raise emotions for which we cannot well account; and which, though perhaps very indifferent in themselves, still continue, from this association, and from the variety of conceptions which they kindle in our minds, to be our favourites through life. The scenes which have been distinguished by the residence of any person, whose memory we admire, produce a similar effect. "Movemur enim, nescio quo pacto, locis ipsis, "in quibus eorum, quos diligimus, aut admiramur adsunt vestigia." The scenes themselves may be little beautiful; but the delight with which we recollect the traces of their lives, blends itself insensibly with the emotions which the scenery ex-

cites; and the admiration which these recollections afford, seems to give a kind of sanctity to the place where they dwelt, and converts every thing into beauty which appears to have been connected with them. There are scenes, undoubtedly, more beautiful than Runnymede, yet, to those who recollect the great event which passed there, there is no scene, perhaps, which so strongly seizes upon the imagination; and although the emotions this recollection produces, are of a very different kind from those which the mere natural scenery can excite, yet they unite themselves so well with these inferior emotions, and spread so venerable a charm over the whole, that one can hardly persuade one's self, that the scene itself is not entitled to this admiration. The valley of Vaucluse is celebrated for its beauty, yet how much of it has been owing to its being the residence of Petrarch!

Mais ces eaux, ce beau ciel, ce vallon enchanteur,
Moins que Pétrarque et Laure interessoient mon cœur.

La voila donc disois-je, oui, voila cette rive
Que Pétrarque charmoit de sa lyre plaintive ;
Ici Pétrarque à Laure exprimant son amour,
Voyoit naître trop tard, mourir trop tot, le jour.
Retrouverai-je encore, sur ces rocs solitaires,
De leurs chiffres unis les tendres caractères ?
Une grotte écartée avoit frappé mes yeux,
Grotte sombre, dis-moi si tu les vis heureux,
M'écriois-je ! un vieux tronc bordoit-il le rivage ?
Laure avoit reposé sous son antique ombrage ;
Je redemandois Laure à l'echo du vallon,
Et l'echo n'avoit point oublié ce doux nom,
Partout mes yeux cherchoient, voyoient, Pétrarque et Laure,
Et par eux, ces beaux lieux s'embellissoient encore.

Les Jardins, Chant 3me.

The Sublime is increased, in the same manner, by whatever tends to increase this exercise of imagination. The field of any celebrated battle becomes sublime from such associations. No man, acquainted with English history, could behold the field of Agincourt, without some emotion of this kind. The additional conceptions which this association produces, and which fill the mind of the spectator on the prospect of

that memorable field, diffuse themselves in some measure over the scene, and give it a sublimity which does not naturally belong to it. The majesty of the Alps themselves is increased by the remembrance of Hannibal's march over them; and who is there, that could stand on the banks of the Rubicon, without feeling his imagination kindle, and his heart beat high?

"Middleton Dale," says Mr Whately, "is a cleft between rocks, ascending gradu-"ally from a romantic village, till it emer-"ges, at about two miles distance, on the "vast moorlands of the peak. It is a dis-"mal entrance to a desert; the hills above "it are bare, the rocks are of a grey colour, "their surfaces are rugged, and their shapes "savage, frequently terminating in craggy "points, sometimes resembling vast un-"wieldy bulwarks, or rising in heavy but-"tresses one above another, and here and "there a misshapen mass bulging out, hangs "lowering over its base. No traces of men

" are to be seen, except in a road, which has " no effect on such a scene of desolation, " and in the limekilns constantly smoking " on the side. The soil is disfigured with " all the tinges of brown and red, which de- " note barrenness; in some places it has " crumbled away, and strata of loose dark " stones only appear; and in others, long " lines of dross, shovelled out of the mines, " have fallen down the steeps. In these " mines, the veins of lead on one side of " the Dale, are observed always to have " corresponding veins, in the same direc- " tion, on the other; and the rocks, though " differing widely in different places, yet al- " ways continue in one style for some way " together, and seem to have a relation to " each other. Both these appearances " make it probable that Middleton Dale is " a chasm rent in the mountains by some " convulsion of nature beyond the memory " of man, or perhaps before the island was " peopled. The scene, though it does not

" prove the fact, yet justifies the supposi-
" tion, and it gives credit to the tales of the
" country people, who, to aggravate its hor-
" rors, always point to a precipice, down
" which they say a young woman of the
" village threw herself headlong, in despair
" at the neglect of a man whom she loved;
" and shew a cavern, where a skeleton once
" was discovered, but of what wretch is un-
" known; his bones were the only memo-
" rial left of him."—*Observations upon Modern Gardening, p. 93.*

It is surely unnecessary to remark, how much the sublimity of this extraordinary scene is increased, by the circumstances of horror which are so finely connected with it.

One of the sublimest objects in natural scenery, is an old and deep wood covering the side of a mountain, when seen from below; yet how much greater sublimity is given to it, by Dr Akenside, by the ad-

dition of the solemn images which, in the following lines, are associated with it!

——Mark the sable woods
That shade sublime yon mountain's nodding brow.
With what religious awe the solemn scene
Commands your steps! as if the reverend form
Of Minos or of Numa, should forsake
Th' Elysian seats, and down the embowering glade
Move to your pausing eye.——

Pleasures of Imagination, Book iii.

There is a passage in one of the Odes of the same poet, in which a scene, which is in general only beautiful, is rendered strikingly sublime, from the imagery with which it is associated.

'Tis thus to work her baneful power,
Suspicion waits the sullen hour
Of fretfulness and strife,
When care the infirmer bosom wrings,
Or Eurus waves his murky wings,
To damp the seats of life.
But come, forsake the scene unbless'd
Which first beheld your faithful breast
To groundless fears a prey;

Come, where with my prevailing lyre
The skies, the streams, the groves conspire
To charm your doubts away.
Thron'd in the sun's descending car
What Power unseen diffuseth far
This tenderness of mind?
What Genius smiles on yonder flood!
What God in whispers from the wood
Bids every thought be kind?

Ode to Suspicion.

I know not, however, any instance where the effect of any association is so remarkable in bestowing sublimity on objects, to which it does not naturally belong, as in the following inimitable poem of Buchanan's on the month of May. This season is, in general, fitted to excite emotions very different from sublimity, and the numerous poems which have been written in celebration of it, dwell uniformly on its circumstances of "vernal joy." In this ode, however, the circumstances which the poet has selected, are of a kind, which, to me, appear inexpressibly sublime, and distinguish

the poem itself by a degree and character of grandeur which I have never felt equalled in any other composition. The idea of it was probably taken from these fine lines of Virgil in the second Georgic, in describing the effects of spring:

Non alios, prima crescentis origine mundi
Illuxisse dies, aliumve habuisse tenorem
Crediderim: Ver illud erat, ver magnus agebat
Orbis, et hybernis parcebant flatibus Euri:
Cum primum lucem pecudes hausere, virûmque
Ferrea progenies duris caput extulit arvis,
Immissæque feræ sylvis, et sidera cœlo.

I believe, however, no man will doubt how much Buchanan has improved upon this beautiful idea.

Calendæ Maiæ.

Salvete sacris deliciis sacræ
Maiæ calendæ, lætitiæ et mero
Ludisque dicatæ jocisque
Et teneris charitum choreis.

Salve voluptas et nitidum decus
Anni recurrens perpetua vice,
Et flos renascentis juventæ,
In senium properantis Ævi.
Cum blanda veris temperies novo
Illuxit orbi, priaïque secula
Fulsere flaventi metallo,
Sponte sua, sine lege, justa,
Talis per omnes continuus tenor
Annos tepenti rura Favonio
Mulcebat, et nullis feraces
Seminibus recreabat agros.
Talis beatis incubat insulis
Felicis auræ perpetuus tepor,
Et nesciis campis senectæ
Difficilis, querulique morbi.
Talis silentum per tacitum nemus
Levi susurrat murmure spiritus,
Lethenque juxta obliviosam
Funereas agitat cupressos.
Forsan supremis cum Deus ignibus
Piabit orbem, lætaque secula
Mundo reducet, talis aura
Æthereos animos fovebit.
Salve fugacis gloria seculi,
Salve secunda digna dies nota,
Salve vetustæ vitæ imago,
E specimen venientis Ævi.

National associations have a similar effect in increasing the emotions of sublimity and beauty, as they very obviously increase the number of images presented to the mind. The fine lines which Virgil has dedicated in his Georgics to the praises of his native country, however beautiful to us, were yet undoubtedly read with a far superior emotion, by an ancient Roman. The prodigies which the same poet has described, as preceding the death of Cæsar, and the still more minute description which Lucan, in the first book of his Pharsalia, has given of such events, on the approach of the civil war, must probably have given to a Roman, who was under the dominion of such national superstitions, the strongest emotions of sublimity and terror; but we read them now without any other emotion, than what arises from the beauty of the composition.

The influence of such associations, in increasing either the beauty or sublimity of Musical composition, can hardly have es-

caped any person's observation. The trifling tune called Belleisle March is said, by a very eminent writer, to have owed its popularity among the people of England, to the supposition, that it was the tune which was played, when the English army marched into Belleisle, and to its consequent association with images of fame, and conquest, and military glory. There are other tunes of the same character, which, without any peculiar merit, yet always serve to please the people, whenever they are performed. The natives of any country, which possesses a national or characteristic music, need not be reminded, how strongly the performance of such airs brings back to them the imagery of their native land; and must often have had occasion to remark how inferior an emotion they excite in those who are strangers to such associations. The effect of the celebrated national song, which is said to overpower the Swiss soldier in a foreign land with melancholy and despair,

and which it is therefore found necessary to forbid in the armies in which they serve, cannot surely be attributed to its composition alone, but to the recollections that it brings, and to those images that it kindles in his mind, of peace, and freedom, and domestic pleasure, from which he is torn, and to which he may never return. Whatever may be the sublimity of Handel's music, the singular effect of it on some late occasions, is, doubtless, not to be ascribed to that sublimity alone, but in a peculiar manner to the place where it was performed; not only from the sacredness of that place, which is, of itself, so well fitted to excite many awful emotions; but, in a considerable degree also, from its being the repository of so many "illustrious dead," and the scene, perhaps of all others, most sacred to those who have any sensibility to the glories of their country.

There are associations, also, which arise from particular professions, or habits of

thought, which serve very well to illustrate the same observation. No man, in general, is sensible to beauty, in those subjects with regard to which he has not previous ideas. The beauty of a theory, or of a relic of antiquity, is unintelligible to a peasant. The charms of the country are altogether lost upon a citizen, who has passed his life in town. In the same manner, the more that our ideas are increased, or our conceptions extended upon any subject, the greater the number of associations we connect with it, the stronger is the emotion of sublimity or beauty we receive from it.

The pleasure, for instance, which the generality of mankind receive from any celebrated painting, is trifling when compared to that which a painter feels, if he is a man of any common degree of candour. What is to them only an accurate representation of nature, is to him a beautiful exertion of genius, and a perfect display of art. The difficulties which occur to his mind in the

design and execution of such a performance, and the testimonies of skill, of taste, and of invention, which the accomplishment of it exhibit, excite a variety of emotions in his breast, of which the common spectator is altogether unsusceptible; and the admiration with which he thus contemplates the genius and art of the painter, blends itself with the peculiar emotions which the picture itself can produce, and enhances to him every beauty that it may possess.

The beauty of any scene in nature is seldom so striking to others, as it is to a landscape-painter, or to those who profess the beautiful art of laying out grounds. The difficulties both of invention and execution which from their professions are familiar to them, render the profusion with which nature often scatters the most picturesque beauties, little less than miraculous. Every little circumstance of form and perspective, and light and shade, which are unnoticed by a common eye, are important in theirs, and,

mingling in their minds the ideas of difficulty, and facility in overcoming it, produce altogether an emotion of delight, incomparably more animated than any that the generality of mankind usually derive from it.

The delight which most men of education receive from the consideration of antiquity, and the beauty that they discover in every object which is connected with ancient times, is in a great measure to be ascribed to the same cause. The antiquarian, in his cabinet, surrounded by the relics of former ages, seems to himself to be removed to periods that are long since past, and indulges in the imagination of living in a world, which, by a very natural kind of prejudice, we are always willing to believe was both wiser and better than the present. All that is venerable or laudable in the history of these times present themselves to his memory. The gallantry, the heroism, the patriotism of antiquity rise again before his view, softened by the obscurity in which they are

involved, and rendered more seducing to the imagination by that obscurity itself, which, while it mingles a sentiment of regret amid his pursuits, serves at the same time to stimulate his fancy to fill up, by its own creation, those long intervals of time of which history has preserved no record. The relics he contemplates seem to approach him still nearer to the ages of his regard. The dress, the furniture, the arms of the times, are so many assistances to his imagination, in guiding or directing its exercise, and, offering him a thousand sources of imagery, provide him with an almost inexhaustible field in which his memory and his fancy may expatiate. There are few men who have not felt somewhat, at least, of the delight of such an employment. There is no man in the least acquainted with the history of antiquity, who does not love to let his imagination loose on the prospect of its remains, and to whom they are not in some measure sacred, from the innumerable

images which they bring. Even the peasant, whose knowledge of former times extends but to a few generations, has yet in his village some monument of the deeds or virtues of his forefathers; and cherishes with a fond veneration the memorial of those good old times to which his imagination returns with delight, and of which he loves to recount the simple tales that tradition has brought him.

And what is it that constitutes that emotion of sublime delight, which every man of common sensibility feels upon the first prospect of Rome? It is not the scene of destruction which is before him. It is not the Tiber, diminished in his imagination to a paltry stream, and stagnating amid the ruins of that magnificence which it once adorned. It is not the triumph of superstition over the wreck of human greatness, and its monuments erected upon the very spot where the first honours of humanity have been gained. It is ancient Rome which fills his imagina-

tion. It is the country of Cæsar, and Cicero, and Virgil, which is before him. It is the mistress of the world which he sees, and who seems to him to rise again from her tomb, to give laws to the universe. All that the labours of his youth, or the studies of his maturer age have acquired, with regard to the history of this great people, open at once before his imagination, and present him with a field of high and solemn imagery, which can never be exhausted. Take from him these associations, conceal from him that it is Rome that he sees, and how different would be his emotion!

II.

The effect which is thus produced, by Associations, in increasing the emotions of sublimity or beauty, is produced also, either in nature or in description, by what are generally termed Picturesque Objects. Instances of such objects are familiar to every one's observation. An old tower in the

middle of a deep wood, a bridge flung across a chasm between rocks, a cottage on a precipice, are common examples. If I am not mistaken, the effect which such objects have on every one's mind, is to suggest an additional train of conceptions, beside what the scene or description itself would have suggested; for it is very obvious, that no objects are remarked as picturesque, which do not strike the imagination by themselves. They are, in general, such circumstances, as coincide, but are not necessarily connected with the character of the scene or description, and which, at first affecting the mind with an emotion of surprise, produce afterwards an increased or additional train of imagery. The effect of such objects, in increasing the emotions either of beauty or sublimity, will probably be obvious from the following instances:

The beauty of sunset, in a fine autumnal evening, seems almost incapable of addition from any circumstance. The various and

radiant colouring of the clouds, the soft light of the sun, that gives so rich a glow to every object on which it falls, the long but mellow shades with which it is contrasted, and the calm and deep repose that seems to steal over universal nature, form altogether a scene, which serves, perhaps better than any other in the world, to satiate the imagination with delight: Yet there is no man who does not know how great an addition this fine scene is capable of receiving from the circumstance of the evening bell. In what, however, does the effect of this most picturesque circumstance consist? Is it not in the additional images which are thus suggested to the imagination? images indeed of melancholy and sadness, but which still are pleasing, and which serve most wonderfully to accord with that solemn and pensive state of mind, which is almost irresistibly produced by this fascinating scene.

Nothing can be more beautiful than Dr.

Goldsmith's description of evening, in the Deserted Village;

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
There as I past with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came soften'd from below:
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whisp'ring wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind.

Yet how much is the beauty of this description increased, by the fine circumstance with which it is closed?

These all in soft confusion sought the shade,
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.

There is a beauty of the same kind produced in the "Seasons," by the addition of one of the most picturesque circumstances that was ever imagined by a poet:

——Lead me to the mountain brow,
Where sits the shepherd on the grassy turf,
Inhaling, healthful, the descending sun.
Around him feeds his many-bleating flock,
Of various cadence, and his sportive lambs
Their frolics play; and now the sprightly race
Invites them forth, when swift, the signal given,
They start away, and sweep the mossy mound
That runs around the hill; the rampart once
Of iron war, in ancient barbarous times.

Spring.

The scene is undoubtedly beautiful of itself, without the addition of the last circumstance; yet how much more beautiful does it become by the new order of thought which this circumstance awakens in the mind, and which, contrasting the remembrance of ancient warfare and turbulent times, with the serenity and repose of the modern scene, agitate the imagination with a variety of indistinct conceptions, which otherwise could never have arisen in it.

The physical arguments of Buchanan, in his poem "de Sphæra," against the doctrine of the motion of the earth, are probably

read with little emotion; but it is impossible to read the following lines of it without delight, from the very picturesque imagery which they contain:

Ergo tam celeri tellus si concita motu
Iret in Occasum, rursusque rediret in Ortum,
Cuncta simul quateret secum, vastoque fragore,
Templa, ædes, miserisque etiam cum civibus urbes
Opprimerit subitæ strages inopina ruinæ.
Ipsæ etiam volucres tranantes aera leni
Remigio alarum, celeri vertigine terræ
Abreptas gemerent sylvas, nidosque tenella
Cum sobole et chara forsan cum conjuge; nec se
Auderet zephyro solus committere turtur,
Ne procul ablatos, terra fugiente, Hymenæos
Et viduum longo luctu defleret amorem.

Lib. 1.

There is a very striking beauty of the same kind in a little poem of Dr Beattie's, entitled, "Retirement."

Thy shades, thy silence now be mine,
Thy charms my only theme;
My haunt, the hollow cliff, whose pine
Waves o'er the gloomy stream,
Where the scar'd owl on pinions grey
Breaks from the rustling boughs,

And down the lone vale sails away
To more profound repose.

" All," says Mr Whatley, in describing the Tinian Lawn at Hagley, " all here is of an " even temper, all mild, placid and serene; " in the gayest season of the day, not more " than cheerful; in the stillest watch of " night, not gloomy. The scene is indeed " peculiarly adapted to the tranquillity of " the latter, when the moon seems to repose " her light on the thick foliage of the grove, " and steadily marks the shade of every " bough. It is delightful then to saunter " here, and see the grass and the gossamer " which entwines it glistening with dew, to " listen, and hear nothing stir, except per- " haps a withered leaf, dropping gently " through a tree, and sheltered from the " chill, to catch the freshness of the evening " air." It is difficult to conceive any thing more beautiful than this description, yet how much is its beauty increased by the concluding circumstance? " A solitary urn,"

" chosen by Mr Pope for the spot, and now " inscribed to his memory, when seen by a " gleam of moonlight through the trees, " fixes that thoughtfulness and composure, " to which the mind is insensibly led by the " rest of this elegant scene."—*Observations on Gardening, p.* 201.

I shall conclude these instances of the effect of picturesque objects, in increasing the emotion of Beauty, with a passage from the Iliad, which contains one of the most striking images that I know of, in poetry, and which I am the more willing to quote, as it has not been so much taken notice of as it deserves. It is the appearance of Achilles, when Phœnix and Ulysses are sent from the Grecian camp to appease his wrath:

Τὼ δ' ἐ βάτην παρὰ θῖνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης,
Πολλὰ μάλ' εὐχομένω γαιήοχῳ Ἐννοσιγαίῳ,
Ῥηϊδίως πεπιθεῖν μεγαλήτορα Αἰακίδαο.
Μυρμιδόνων δ' ἐπί τε κλισίας καὶ νῆας ἱκέσθην,

Τὸν δ' εὗρον φρένα τερπόμενον φόρμιγγι λιγείῃ,
Καλῇ, δαιδαλέῃ, ἐπὶ δ' ἀργυρέῳ ζυγὸς ἦεν·
Τὴν ἄρετ' ἐξ ἐριδῶν, πτόλιν Ἠετίωνος ὀλέσσας·
Τῇ ὅγε θυμὸν ἔτερπεν, ἄειδε δ' ἄρα κλέα ἀνδρῶν·

Iliad, Lib. ix. *v.* 182.

Thro' the still night they march, and hear the roar
Of murmuring billows, on the sounding shore;
And now arrived, where on the sandy bay,
The Myrmidonian tents and vessels lay,
Amus'd, at ease, the godlike man they found
Pleas'd with the solemn harp's harmonious sound.
With this he soothes his angry soul, and sings
Th' immortal deeds of heroes and of kings.

Book ix. *v.* 236.

It was impossible for the poet to have imagined any other occupation so well fitted to the mighty mind of Achilles, or so effectual in interesting the reader in the fate of him, whom Dr Beattie calls, with truth, the most terrific human personage that poetical imagination has feigned.

The sublime is increased in the same manner, by the addition of picturesque objects. The striking image with which Vir-

gil concludes the description of the prodigies which attended the death of Cæsar, is well known:

Silicet et tempus veniet cum finibus illis
Agricola, incurvo terram molitus aratro,
Exesa inveniet scabrâ rubigine pila:
Aut gravibus rastris, galeas pulsabit inanes,
Grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulchris.

There are few passages more sublime in the Pharsalia of Lucan, than the description, in the third Book, of one of Pompey's armies, blocked up by Cæsar in a part of the country where there was no water, and where the soldiers were perishing with thirst. After describing, very minutely, the fruitless attempts of the army to obtain relief, and the miserable expedients with which they endeavoured to supply their wants, he proceeds in the following nervous and beautiful lines, of which, I am persuaded, the last circumstance is too striking to require any comment:

O fortunati, fugiens quos barbarus hostis,
Fontibus immisto stravit per rura veneno.
Hos licet in fluvios saniem, tabemque ferarum,
Pallida Dictæis Cæsar, nascentia saxis
Infundas aconita palam, Romana juventus
Non decepta bibet—torrentur viscera flamma
Oraque sicca rigent squamosis aspera linguis;
Jam marcent venæ, nulloque humore rigatus
Aëris alternos angustat Pulmo meatus,
Rescissoque nocent suspiria dura palato.
Pandunt ora siti, nocturnumque aëra captant.
Expectant imbres, quorum modo cuncta natabant
Impulsu, et siccis vultus in nubibus hærent.
Quoque magis miseros undæ jejunia solvant
Non, super arantem Meroen, Cancrique sub axe
Qua nudi Garamantes arant, sedere, sed inter
Stagnantem Sicorim, et rapidum deprensus Iberum,
Spectat vicinos, sitiens exercitus, amnes.

Lib. iv. *ad med.*

The fine description in the Gierusalemme Liberata, of a similar distress in the army of Godfrey, before the walls of Jerusalem, has probably been borrowed from this passage of Lucan; and it is pleasing to observe, with what address Tasso has imitated, though not copied, the picturesque circum-

stance with which the description of the Roman poet is closed. Instead of aggravating the distress of the soldier, by the prospect of waters which he could not approach, he recalls to his remembrance the cool shades and still fountains of his native land; a circumstance, not only singularly pathetic, but more fertile also of imagery, than perhaps any other that the poet could have imagined:

S'alcun giamai tra frondeggiente rive
Puro vide stagnar liquido argento,
O giù precipitose vi acque vive
Per Alpe, o'n piaggia érboso à passo lento;
Quello al vago desio forma, e descrive,
E ministra materia al suo tormento.

In Thomson's description of Winter in the northern regions, though the description itself is sublime, yet one additional circumstance adds powerfully to its sublimity:

Thence, winding eastward to the Tartar coast,
She sweeps the howling margin of the main,

Where, undissolving from the first of time
Snows swell on snows, amazing, to the sky,
And icy mountains, high on mountains pil'd,
Seem to the shivering sailor, from afar,
Shapeless and white, an atmosphere of clouds.
Ocean itself no longer can resist
The binding fury: but in all its rage
Of tempest, taken by the boundless frost,
Is many a fathom to the bottom chained,
And bid to roar no more—a bleak expanse
Shagg'd o'er with wavy rocks, cheerless and void
Of every life, that from the dreary months
Flies, conscious, southward. Miserable they!
Who, here entangled in the gathering ice,
Take their last look of the descending sun,
While full of death, and fierce with tenfold frost,
The long, long night, incumbent o'er their heads
Falls horrible.——

In the following masterly description of a very sublime scene in nature, by Mr Whately, I doubt not but that it will be acknowledged, how much the sublimity of it is increased, by the very picturesque imagery which the occupations of the inhabitants afford. "A scene at the New Weir, "on the river Wye, which in itself is truly

" great and awful, so far from being dis-
" turbed, becomes more interesting and im-
" portant, by the business to which it is des-
" tined. It is a chasm between two ranges
" of hills, which rise almost perpendicularly
" from the water; the rocks on the sides
" are mostly heavy masses, and their colour
" is generally brown; but here and there a
" pale craggy cliff starts up to a vast height
" above the rest, unconnected, broken, and
" bare; large trees frequently force out their
" way amongst them, and many of them
" stand far back in the covert, where
" their natural dusky hue is deepened by
" the shadow which overhangs them. The
" river, too, as it retires, loses itself amid the
" woods, which close immediately above,
" then rise thick and high, and darken the
" water. In the midst of all this gloom is
" an iron forge, covered with a black cloud
" of smoke, and surrounded with half-burn-
" ed ore, with coal, and with cinders. The
" fuel for it is brought down a path, worn

" into steps, narrow, and steep, and wind-
" ing among the precipices; and near it is
" an open space of barren moor, about
" which are scattered the huts of the work-
" men. It stands close to the cascade of
" the Weir, where the agitation of the cur-
" rent is increased by large fragments of
" rocks which have been swept down by
" floods from the banks, or shivered by tem-
" pests from the brow; and, at stated inter-
" vals, the sullen sound, from the strokes of
" the great hammers in the forge, deadens
" the roar of the waterfall."—*Page* 109.

There is a similar beauty, if I am not mistaken, in the conclusion of the following passage from Mons. Diderot.

" Qu'est ce qu'il faut au pöete? Est-ce
" une nature brute ou cultivée? paisible
" ou troublée? Préféra-t-il la beauté d'un
" jour pur et serein, à l'horreur d'une nuit
" obscure, où le siflement interrompu des
" vents se mêle par intervalles au mur-
" mure sourd et continu d'un tonnerre

" éloigné, et où il voit l'éclair allumer le
" ciel sur la tête? Préfèra-t-il le spectacle
" d'une mer tranquille, à celui des flots
" agitées? le muet et froid aspect d'un pa-
" lais, à la promènade parmi des ruines?
" un édifice construit, un éspace planté de la
" main des hommes, au touffu d'une antique
" forêt, au creux ignoré d'une roche deserte?
" des nappes d'eau, des bassins, des cas-
" cades, à la vûe d'une cataracte qui se
" brise en tombant à travers des rochers, et
" dont le bruit se fait entendre au loin du
" berger, qui a conduit son troupeau dans
" la montagne, et qui l'écoute avec éffroi?"
—*Epitre à Mons. Grimm, sur la Poësie Dramatique.*

I shall conclude these illustrations with a very sublime one from the Paradise Regained of Milton, in which I believe the force of the concluding stroke will not be denied.

——Either tropic now
'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heav'n; the clouds
From many a horrid rift abortive, pour'd
Fierce rain, with lightning mix'd; nor slept the winds

Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vext wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks
Bow'd their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer——Ill wast Thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God!

Book iv.

In these, and a thousand other instances that might be produced, I believe every man of sensibility will be conscious of a variety of great or pleasing images passing with rapidity in his imagination, beyond what the scene or description immediately before him can of themselves excite. They seem often, indeed, to have but a very distant relation to the object that at first excited them; and the object itself appears only to serve as a hint to awaken the imagination, and to lead it through every analogous idea that has place in the memory. It is then, indeed, in this powerless state of reverie, when we are carried on by our conceptions, not guiding them, that the deep-

est emotions of beauty or sublimity are felt; that our hearts swell with feelings which language is too weak to express; and that, in the depth of silence and astonishment, we pay to the charm that enthralls us, the most flattering mark of our applause.

"The power of such characters in Na-"ture," says Mr Whately (from whom I am happy to borrow the following observations, not only from the beauty of their expression, but from their singular coincidence in the illustration of the fact I have been endeavouring to establish), "the power of "such characters is not confined to the "ideas which the objects themselves imme-"diately suggest; for these are connected "with others, which insensibly lead to sub-"jects far distant perhaps from the original "thought, and related to it only by simili-"tude in the sensations they excite. In a "prospect enriched and enlivened with in-"habitants and cultivation, the attention is "caught first by the circumstances which

" are gayest in the season, the bloom of an
" orchard, the festivity of a hay-field, and
" the carols of a harvest-home; but the
" cheerfulness which these infuse into the
" mind, expands afterwards to other objects
" than those immediately presented to the
" eye, and we are thereby disposed to re-
" ceive, and delighted to pursue, a variety of
" pleasing ideas, and every benevolent feel-
" ing. At the sight of a ruin, reflections on
" the change, the decay, and the desolation
" before us naturally occur; and they intro-
" duce a long succession of others, all tinc-
" tured with that melancholy which these
" have inspired; or if the monument revive
" the memory of former times, we do not
" stop at the simple fact which it records,
" but recollect many more coëval circum-
" stances which we see, not perhaps as
" they were, but as they are come down
" to us, venerable with age, and magnified
" by fame. Even without the assistance of
" buildings, or other adventitious circum-

" stances, nature alone furnishes materials
" for scenes which may be adapted to al-
" most every kind of expression. Their
" operation is general, and their consequen-
" ces infinite: the mind is elevated, de-
" pressed, or composed, as gaiety, gloom,
" or tranquillity prevail in the scene, and
" we soon lose sight of the mean by which
" the character is formed. We forget the
" particular object it presents, and, giving
" way to their effects, without recurring to
" the cause, we follow the track they have
" begun, to any extent which the disposi-
" tions they accord with will allow. It
" suffices that the scenes of nature have
" power to affect our imagination and our
" sensibility: for such is the constitution of
" the human mind, that if once it is agitat-
" ed, the emotion often spreads beyond
" the occasion: when the passions are rous-
" ed, their course is unrestrained; when the
" fancy is on the wing, its flight is unbound-
" ed, and, quitting the inanimate objects

" which first gave them their spring, we may " be led, by thought above thought, widely " differing in degree, but still corresponding " in character, till we rise from familiar sub- " jects to the sublimest conceptions, and " are rapt in the contemplation of whatever " is great or beautiful, which we see in na- " ture, feel in man, or attribute to the Divi- " nity."—*Page* 154.

III.

The influence of such additional trains of imagery, in increasing the Emotions of sublimity or beauty, might be illustrated from many other circumstances equally familiar. I am induced to mention only the following; because it is one of the most striking that I know, and because it is probable that most men of education have at least in some degree been conscious of it:—the influence, I mean, of an acquaintance with Poetry in our earlier years, in increasing our sensibility to the beauties of nature.

The generality of mankind live in the world, without receiving any kind of delight from the various scenes of beauty which its order displays. The rising and setting of the sun, the varying aspect of the moon, the vicissitude of seasons, the revolution of the planets, and all the stupendous scenery that they produce, are to them only common occurrences, like the ordinary events of every day. They have been so long familiar, that they cease to strike them with any appearance either of magnificence or beauty, and are regarded by them with no other sentiments than as being useful for the purposes of human life. We may all remember a period in our lives, when this was the state of our own minds; and it is probable most men will recollect, that the time when nature began to appear to them in another view, was, when they were engaged in the study of classical literature. In most men, at least, the first appearance of poetical imagination is at school, when

their imaginations begin to be warmed by the descriptions of ancient poetry, and when they have acquired a new sense, as it were, with which they can behold the face of nature.

How different, from this period, become the sentiments with which the scenery of nature is contemplated, by those who have any imagination! The beautiful forms of ancient mythology, with which the fancy of poets peopled every element, are now ready to appear to their minds, upon the prospect of every scene. The descriptions of ancient authors, so long admired, and so deserving of admiration, occur to them at every moment, and with them, all those enthusiastic ideas of ancient genius and glory, which the study of so many years of youth so naturally leads them to form. Or, if the study of modern poetry has succeeded to that of the ancient, a thousand other beautiful associations are acquired, which, instead of destroying, serve easily to unite with the

former, and to afford a new source of delight. The awful forms of Gothic superstition, the wild and romantic imagery, which the turbulence of the middle ages, the Crusades, and the institution of chivalry, have spread over every country of Europe, arise to the imagination in every scene; accompanied with all those pleasing recollections of prowess, and adventure, and courteous manners, which distinguished those memorable times. With such images in their minds, it is not common nature that appears to surround them. It is nature embellished and made sacred by the memory of Theocritus and Virgil, and Milton and Tasso; their genius seems still to linger among the scenes which inspired it, and to irradiate every object where it dwells; and the creation of their fancy seem the fit inhabitants of that nature, which their descriptions have clothed with beauty.

Nor is it only in providing so many sources of association, that the influence of an

acquaintance with poetry consists. It is yet still more powerful in giving *character* to the different appearances of nature, in connecting them with various emotions and affections of our hearts, and in thus providing an almost inexhaustible source either of solemn or cheerful meditation. What to ordinary men is but common occurrence, or common scenery, to those who have such associations, is full of beauty. The seasons of the year, which are marked only by the generality of mankind by the different occupations or amusements they bring, have each of them, to such men, peculiar expressions, and awaken them to an exercise either of pleasing or of awful thought. The seasons of the day, which are regarded only by the common spectator as the call to labour, or to rest, are to them characterestic either of cheerfulness or solemnity, and connected with all the various emotions which these characters excite. Even the familiar circumstances of general

nature, which pass unheeded by a common eye, the cottage, the sheep-fold, the curfew, all have expressions to them, because, in the compositions to which they have been accustomed, these all are associated with peculiar characters, or rendered expressive of them, and, leading them to the remembrance of such associations, enable them to behold, with corresponding dispositions, the scenes which are before them, and to feel from their prospect, the same powerful influence, which the eloquence of poetry has ascribed to them.

Associations of this kind, when acquired in early life, are seldom altogether lost; and whatever inconveniences they may sometimes have with regard to the general character, or however much they may be ridiculed by those who do not experience them, they are yet productive, to those who possess them, of a perpetual and innocent delight. Nature herself is their friend; in her most dreadful, as well as her most love-

ly scenes, they can discover something either to elevate their imaginations, or to move their hearts; and amid every change of scenery, or of climate, can still find themselves among the early objects of their admiration, or their love.

CHAPTER II.

Analysis of this Exercise of Imagination.

SECTION I.

THE illustrations in the preceding chapter seem to shew, that whenever the emotions of Sublimity or Beauty are felt, that exercise of Imagination is produced, which consists in the indulgence of a train of thought; that when this exercise is prevented, these emotions are unfelt or unperceived; and that whatever tends to increase this exercise of mind, tends in the same proportion to increase these emotions. If these illustrations are just, it seems reasonable to conclude, that the effect produced upon the mind, by objects of Sublimity and Beauty, consists in the production of this exercise of Imagination.

Although, however, this conclusion seems to me both just and consonant to experience, yet it is in itself too general, to be considered as a sufficient account of the nature of that operation of mind which takes place in the case of such Emotions. There are many trains of ideas of which we are conscious, which are unattended with any kind of pleasure. There are other operations of mind, in which such trains of thought are necessarily produced, without exciting any similar emotion. Even in the common hours of life, every man is conscious of a continued succession of thoughts passing through his mind, suggested either by the presence of external objects, or arising from the established laws of association: such trains of thought, however, are seldom attended with pleasure, and still seldomer with an emotion, corresponding, in any degree, to the emotions of sublimity or beauty.

There are, in like manner, many cases

where objects excite a train of thought in the mind, without exciting any emotion of pleasure or delight. The prospect of the house, for instance, where one has formerly lived, excites very naturally a train of conceptions in the mind; yet it is by no means true that such an exercise of imagination is necessarily accompanied with pleasure, for these conceptions not only may be, but very often are of a kind extremely indifferent, and sometimes also simply painful. The mention of an event in history, or of a fact in science, naturally leads us to the conception of a number of related events, or similar facts; yet it is obvious, that in such a case the exercise of mind which is produced, if it is accompanied with any pleasure at all, is in most cases accompanied with a pleasure very different from that which attends the emotions of sublimity or beauty.

If therefore some train of thought, or some exercise of Imagination is necessary

for the production of the emotions of Taste, it is obvious that this is not every train of thought of which we are capable. To ascertain, therefore, with any precision, either the nature or the causes of these emotions, it is previously necessary to investigate the nature of those trains of thought that are produced by objects of sublimity and beauty, and their difference from those ordinary trains, which are unaccompanied with such pleasure.

As far as I am able to judge, this difference consists in two things. 1*st*, In the Nature of the ideas or conceptions which compose such trains: and, 2*dly*, In the Nature or Law of their succession.

I.

In our ordinary trains of thought, every man must be conscious that the ideas which compose them, are very frequently of a kind which excite no emotions either of pleasure or pain. There is an infinite va-

riety of our ideas, as well as of our sensations, that may be termed indifferent, which are perceived without any sentiment either of pain or pleasure, and which pass as it were before the mind, without making any farther impression than simply exciting the consciousness of their existence. That such ideas compose a great part, and perhaps the greatest part of our ordinary trains of thought, is apparent from the single consideration, that such trains are seldom attended with emotion of any kind.

The trains of thought which are suggested by external objects, are very frequently of a similar kind. The greater part of such objects are simply indifferent, or at least are regarded as indifferent in our common hours either of occupation or amusement: the conceptions which they produce, by the laws of association, partake of the nature or character of the object which originally excited them, and the whole train passes through our mind without leaving

any farther emotion, than perhaps that general emotion of pleasure which accompanies the exercise of our faculties. It is scarcely possible for us to pass an hour of our lives without experiencing some train of thought of this kind, suggested by some of the external objects which happen to surround us. The indifference with which such trains are either pursued or deserted, is a sufficient evidence, that the ideas of which they are composed, are in general of a kind unfitted to produce any emotion, either of pleasure or pain.

In the case of those trains of thought, on the contrary, which are suggested by objects either of Sublimity or Beauty, I apprehend it will be found, that they are in all cases composed of ideas capable of exciting some affection or emotion; and that not only the whole succession is accompanied with that peculiar emotion, which we call the Emotion of Beauty or Sublimity, but that every individual idea of such a

succession is in itself productive of some simple Emotion or other. Thus the ideas suggested by the scenery of Spring, are ideas productive of emotions of Cheerfulness, of Gladness, and of Tenderness. The images suggested by the prospect of ruins, are images belonging to Pity, to Melancholy, and to Admiration. The ideas, in the same manner, awakened by the view of the ocean in a storm, are ideas of Power, of Majesty, and of Terror. In every case where the emotions of Taste are felt, I conceive it will be found, that the train of thought which is excited, is distinguished by some character of emotion, and that it is by this means distinguished from our common or ordinary successions of thought. To prevent a very tedious and unnecessary circumlocution, such ideas may perhaps, without any impropriety, be termed ideas of Emotion; and I shall beg leave therefore to use the expression in this sense.

The first circumstance, then, which seems

to distinguish those trains of thought which are produced by objects either of Sublimity or Beauty, is, that the ideas or conceptions of which they are composed, are ideas of Emotion.

II.

In our ordinary trains of thought, there seldom appears any general principle of connection among the ideas which compose them. Each idea, indeed, is related, by an established law of our nature, to that which immediately preceded and that which immediately follows it, but in the whole series there is no predominant relation or bond of connection. This want of general connection is so strong, that even that most general of all relations, the relation either of pleasure or pain, is frequently violated. Images both of the one kind and the other succeed each other in the course of the train; and when we put an end to it, we are often at a loss to say, whether the whole

series was pleasant or painful. Of this irregularity, I think every man will be convinced, who chooses to attend to it.

In those trains, on the contrary, which are suggested by objects of Sublimity or Beauty, however slight the connection between individual thoughts may be, I believe it will be found, that there is always some general principle of connection which pervades the whole, and gives them some certain and definite character. They are either gay, or pathetic, or melancholy, or solemn, or awful, or elevating, &c. according to the nature of the emotion which is first excited. Thus the prospect of a serene evening in summer, produces first an emotion of peacefulness and tranquillity, and then suggests a variety of images corresponding to this primary impression. The sight of a torrent, or of a storm, in the same manner, impresses us first with sentiments of awe, or solemnity, or terror, and then awakens in our minds a series of concep-

tions allied to this peculiar emotion. Whatever may be the character of the original emotion, the images which succeed seem all to have a relation to this character; and if we trace them back, we shall discover not only a connection between the individual thoughts of the train, but also a general relation among the whole, and a conformity to that peculiar emotion which first excited them.

The train of thought, therefore, which takes place in the mind, upon the prospect of objects of sublimity and beauty, may be considered as consisting in a regular or consistent train of ideas of emotion, and as distinguished from our ordinary trains of thought, 1*st*, In respect of the Nature of the ideas of which it is composed, by their being ideas productive of Emotion: and 2*dly*, In respect of their Succession, by their being distinguished by some general principle of connection, which subsists through the whole extent of the train.

The truth of the account which I have

now given of the nature of that train of thought which attends the emotions of sublimity and beauty, must undoubtedly at last be determined by its conformity to general experience and observation. There are some considerations, however, of a very obvious and familiar kind, which it may be useful to suggest to the reader, for the purpose of affording him a method of investigating with accuracy the truth of this account.

If it is true that the ideas which compose that train of thought, which attends the emotions of Taste, are uniformly ideas of Emotion, then it ought in fact to be found, that no objects or qualities are experienced to be beautiful or sublime, but such as are productive of some simple Emotion.

If it is true that such trains of thought are uniformly distinguished by some general principle of connection, then it ought also to be found, that no Composition of objects or qualities produces such emotions,

in which this Unity of character or of emotion is not preserved.

I shall endeavour, at some length, to illustrate the truth of both these propositions.

SECTION II.

That no objects, or qualities in objects, are, in fact, felt either as beautiful or sublime, but such as are productive of some Simple Emotion, seems evident from the following familiar considerations.

I.

Wherever the Emotions of Sublimity or Beauty are felt, I believe it will be found, that some affection is uniformly excited by the presence of the object, before the more complex Emotion of Beauty is felt; and that if no such affection is excited, no Emotion of Beauty or Sublimity is produced. The truth of this observation may be illustrated, both from common language, and common experience.

1. If any man were to assert, that some object, though positively indifferent or un-

interesting, was yet beautiful or sublime, every one would consider it as asserting an absurdity. If, on the other hand, he were to assert, that the object had neither beauty nor sublimity to him, because there was no quality in it which could give him any emotion, I apprehend we should not only clearly understand his meaning, but very readily allow his reason; and if the object were such as appeared to us in the light either of Sublimity or Beauty, and we wished to make him sensible of it, the way that we should naturally take, would be to point out to him some affecting or interesting quality, which we imagined he had overlooked, and which we felt was the foundation of our own emotion.

There is undoubtedly a very great difference between the Emotion of Taste, and any Simple Emotion, as of Cheerfulness, Tenderness, Melancholy, Solemnity, Elevation, Terror, &c. as such emotions are frequently felt without any sentiment of Beauty

or Sublimity; but there is no case, I believe, where the Emotions of Taste are felt, without the previous production of some such Simple Emotion. It is often indeed difficult to say, what is the quality in the object which produces the Emotion of Beauty; and it is sometimes difficult, in the case of complex objects, when different qualities unite in the production of Emotion, to define the exact nature of that Emotion which we feel; but whether the general impression we receive, is that of Gaiety, or Tenderness, or Melancholy, or Solemnity, or Elevation, or Terror, &c. we have never any difficulty of determining; and so strong is our conviction of the dependence of the Emotions of Taste upon some such previous simple emotion, that whenever we endeavour to explain the Beauty or Sublimity of any object, we uniformly proceed by pointing out the interesting or affecting quality in it, which is fitted to produce this previous emotion. It is not only impossible for us to ima-

gine an object of Taste, that is not an object of Emotion; but it is impossible to describe any such object, without resting the description upon that quality, or those qualities in it, which are productive of Simple Emotion.

2. Every man has had reason to observe a difference in his sentiments, with regard to the beauty of particular objects, from those of other people; either in his considering certain objects as beautiful, which did not appear so to them, or in their considering certain objects as beautiful which did not appear so to him. There is no instance of this more common than in the case of airs in music. In the first case of such a difference of opinion, we generally endeavour to recollect, whether there is not some accidental association of pleasure which we have with such objects, and which affords us that delight which other people do not share; and, if not unfrequently happens, that we assign such associations as the

cause of our pleasure, and as our apology for differing from their opinion. In the other case, we generally take it for granted, that they who feel a beauty where we do not, have some pleasing association with the object in question, of which we are unconscious, and which is accordingly productive to them of that delight in which we are unable to share. In both cases, although we may not discover what the particular association is, we do not fail to suppose that some such association exists which is the foundation of the sentiment of beauty, and to consider this difference of opinion as sufficiently accounted for on such a supposition. This very natural kind of reasoning could not, I think, take place, if we did not find from experience, that those objects only are productive of the Sentiment of Beauty, which are capable of exciting Emotion.

3. The different habits and occupations of life produce a similar effect on the sentiments of mankind with regard to the ob-

jects of Taste, by their tendency to confine their sensibility to a certain class of objects, and to render all others indifferent to them. In our progress from infancy to manhood, how much do our sentiments of beauty change with our years! how often, in the course of this progress, do we look back with contempt, or at least with wonder, upon the tastes of our earlier days, and the objects that gratified them! and how uniformly in all this progress do our opinions of Beauty coincide with the prevalent Emotions of our hearts, and with that change of sensibility which the progress of life occasions! As soon as any class of objects loses its importance in our esteem, as soon as their presence ceases to bring us pleasure, or their absence to give us pain, the beauty in which our infant imagination arrayed them disappears, and begins to irradiate another class of objects, which we are willing to flatter ourselves are more deserving of such sentiments, but which have often no other value,

than in their coincidence with those new emotions that begin to swell in our breasts. The little circle of infant beauty, contains no other objects than those that can excite the affections of the child. The wider range which youth discovers, is still limited by the same boundaries which nature has prescribed to the affections of youth. It is only when we arrive at manhood, and still more, when either the liberality of our education, or the original capacity of our minds, have led us to experience or to participate in all the affections of our nature, that we acquire that comprehensive taste, which can enable us to discover, and to relish, every species of Sublimity and Beauty.

It is easily observable, also, that besides the natural progress of life, the habits of thought, which men acquire from the diversity of their occupations, tend in the same proportion to limit their sense of Beauty or Sublimity, as they limit their emotions to a particular character or kind. The lover

reads or hears with indifference, of all that is most sublime in the history of ambition, and wonders only at the folly of mankind, who can sacrifice their ease, their comforts, and all the best pleasures of life, to the unsubstantial pursuit of power. The man, whose life has been passed in the pursuits of commerce, and who has learned to estimate every thing by its value in money, laughs at the labours of the Philosopher or the Poet, and beholds with indifference the most splendid pursuits of life, if they are not repaid by wealth. The anecdote of a late celebrated Mathematician is well known, who read the Paradise Lost, without being able to discover in it anything that was sublime, but who said that he could never read the queries at the end of Newton's Optics, without feeling his hair stand on end, and his blood run cold. There are thousands who have read the old ballad of Chevy Chase, without having their imaginations inflamed with the ideas

of military glory. It is the Brave only, who, in the perusal of it, like the gallant Sir Philip Sidney, feel "their hearts moved, "as by the sound of a trumpet."

The effect of such habits of mind upon the sense of Beauty, may, in some degree, be observed in all the different classes of mankind; and there are probably few men, who have not had occasion to remark how much the diversity of tastes corresponds to the diversity of occupations, and, even in the most trifling things, how strongly the sentiments of Beauty, in different men, are expressive of their prevailing habits, or turn of mind. It is only in the higher stations, accordingly, or in the liberal professions of life, that we expect to find men either of a delicate or comprehensive taste. The inferior situations of life, by contracting the knowledge and the affections of men within very narrow limits, produce insensibly a similar contraction in their notions of the beautiful or the sublime. The finest natural taste is

seldom found able to withstand that narrowness and insensibility of mind, which is perhaps necessarily acquired by the minute and uninteresting details of the mechanical arts; and they who have been doomed, by their professions, to pass their earlier years in populous and commercial cities, and in the narrow and selfish pursuits which prevail there, soon lose that sensibility which is the most natural of all,—the sensibility to the beauties of the country; because they lose all those sentiments of tenderness and innocence, which are the foundation of much the greater part of the associations we connect with the scenery of Nature.

4. The difference of original character, or the natural tendency of our minds to particular kinds of emotion, produces a similar difference in our sentiments of Beauty, and serves, in a very obvious manner, to limit our taste to a certain class or character of objects. There are men, for instance, who, in all the varieties of external nature, find no-

thing beautiful but as it tends to awaken in them a sentiment of sadness, who meet the return of Spring with minds only prophetic of its decay, and who follow the decline of Autumn with no other remembrance than that the beauties of the year are gone. There are men, on the contrary, to whom every appearance of Nature is beautiful, as awakening a sentiment of gaiety;—to whom Spring and Autumn alike are welcome, because they bring to them only different images of joy;—and who, even in the most desolate and wintry scenes, are yet able to discover something in which their hearts may rejoice. It is not, surely, that Nature herself is different, that so different effects are produced upon the imaginations of these men; but it is because the original constitution of their minds has led them to different habits of Emotion,—because their imaginations seize only those expressions in nature, which are allied to their prevailing dispositions,—and because every other appearance

is indifferent to them, but those which fall in with the peculiar sensibility of their hearts. The gaiety of Nature alone, is beautiful to the cheerful man; its melancholy, to the man of sadness; because these alone are the qualities which accord with the Emotions they are accustomed to cherish, and in which their imaginations delight to indulge.

The same observation is equally applicable to the different tastes of men in Poetry, and the rest of the fine arts; and the productions that all men peculiarly admire, are those which suit that peculiar strain of Emotion, to which, from their original constitution, they are most strongly disposed. The ardent and gallant mind sickens at the insipidity of pastoral, and the languor of elegiac poetry, and delights only in the great interests of the Tragic and the Epic Muse. The tender and romantic peruse, with indifference, the Iliad and the Paradise Lost, and return with gladness to those favoured compositions, which are descriptive of the joys

or sorrows of Love. The gay and the frivolous, on the contrary, alike insensible to the sentiments either of Tenderness or Magnanimity, find their delight in that cold but lively style of poetry, which has been produced by the gallantry of modern times, and which, in its principal features, is so strongly characteristic of the passion itself. In general, those kinds of poetry only are delightful, or awaken us to any very sensible Emotions of Sublimity or Beauty, which fall in with our peculiar habits of sentiment or feeling; and if it rarely happens, that one species of poetry is relished to the exclusion of every other, it arises only from this, that it is equally rare, that one species of Emotion should have so completely the dominion of the heart, as to exclude all Emotions of any other kind. In proportion, however, as our sensibility is weak, with regard to any class of objects, it is observable, that our sense of Sublimity or Beauty in such objects, is weak in the same proportion;

and wherever it happens (for it sometimes does happen), that men, from their original constitution, are incapable of any one species of Emotion, I believe it will also be found, that they are equally insensible to all the Sublimity or Beauty which the rest of the world find in the objects of such Emotion.

5. Besides the influence of permanent habits of thought, or of the diversities of original disposition upon our sentiments of Beauty, every man must have had occasion to observe, that the perception of Beauty depends also on the temporary sensibility of his mind; and that even objects of the most experienced Beauty, fail in exciting their usual delight, when they occur to him in moments, when he is under the dominion of different emotions from those with which he usually regards them. In our seasons of gaiety, we behold with indifference the same objects, which delight our imaginations when we are under the impressions of tenderness or melancholy. In

our seasons of despondence, we turn, with some kind of aversion, from the objects or the reflections that enchant us in our hours of gaiety. In the common hours of life, in the same manner, when we are either busy or unoccupied, and when our minds are free from every kind of sensibility, the objects of taste make but a feeble impression upon us; and are either altogether neglected, or tacitly reserved to another time, when we may be more in the temper to enjoy them. The husbandman who goes out to observe the state of his grounds, the man of business who walks forth to ruminate about his affairs, or the philosopher, to reason or reflect, whatever their natural sensibilities may be, are at such times insensible to every beauty that the scenery of nature may exhibit; nor do they begin to feel them, until they withdraw their attention from the particular objects of their thought, and abandon themselves to the emotions which such scenes may happen to inspire.

There are even moments of listlessness and languor, in which no objects of Taste whatever can excite their usual delight, in which our favourite landscapes, our favourite airs, cease altogether to affect us; and when sometimes we almost wonder what is the secret spell that hangs over our minds, and prevents us from enjoying the pleasures that are within our reach. It is not that the objects of such pleasures are changed; it is not even that we have not the wish to enjoy them, for this we frequently attempt, and attempt in vain; but it is because we come to them either with minds fatigued, and with spirits below their usual tone, or under the influence of other feelings than are necessary for their enjoyment. Whenever we return to that state of mind which is favourable to such emotions, our delight returns with it, and the objects of such pleasures become as favourite as before.

II.

It is further observable, that our sense of the Beauty or Sublimity of every object depends upon that quality, or those qualities of it which we consider; and that objects of the most acknowledged beauty cease to affect us with such emotions, when we make any of their indifferent or uninteresting qualities the object of our consideration. There is no production of Taste whatever, which has not many qualities of a very indifferent kind; and there can be no doubt, both that we have it in our power to make any of these qualities the object of our attention, and that we very often do so, without regarding any of those qualities of emotion, upon which its Beauty or its Sublimity is founded. In such cases, I believe every one has felt, that the effect upon his mind corresponds to the quality he considers.

1. It is difficult, for instance, to enumerate the various qualities which may produce

the emotion of Beauty, in the statues of the Venus de Medicis, or the Apollo Belvidere; yet it is undoubtedly possible for any man to see these masterpieces of statuary, and yet feel no Emotion of Beauty. The delicacy, the modesty, the timidity of the one, the grace, the dignity, the majesty of the other, and in both the inimitable art with which these characters are expressed, are, in general, the qualities which first impress themselves upon the imagination of the spectator; yet the man of the best taste may afterwards see them, without thinking of any such expressions. He may observe their dimensions, he may study their proportions, he may attend to the particular state of their preservation, the history of their discovery, or even the nature of the marble of which they are made. All these are as truly qualities of these statues, as their majesty or their grace, and may certainly, at particular times, happen to engage the attention of the man of the most refin-

ed taste. That in such cases, no Emotion of Beauty would be felt, and that before it could be felt, it would be necessary for the spectator to withdraw his mind from the consideration of such unaffecting qualities, is too obvious to require any illustration.

The same observation is applicable to every other production of Taste. There is no poem, no painting, no musical composition, however beautiful or sublime, that has not many qualities or attributes, that are altogether uninteresting, and which may not be made the object of attention at particular times, although in general they are left out of consideration. The Inversions of Milton, the compound Epithets of Thomson, are as really qualities of their compositions, as the sublimity of the one, or the tenderness of the other. The person who should make such qualities alone the object of his attention, in the perusal of the Seasons, or the Paradise Lost, though he, might certainly receive some instruction,

would doubtless receive little delight; and if he were really capable of feeling the Sublimity or Beauty which distinguish these compositions, it must be to other and more affecting qualities of them that he must turn his regard. While these minute and unaffecting circumstances were the objects of his attention, he could be conscious of no greater emotion than what he might receive from the perusal of the most unanimated prose. It is in consequence of this, that the exercise of Criticism never fails to destroy, for the time, our sensibility to the beauty of every composition, and that habits of this kind so generally end in destroying the sensibility of Taste. They accustom us to consider every composition in relation only to rules; they turn our attention from those qualities upon which their effect is founded as objects of Taste, to the consideration of the principles by which this effect is attained; and instead of that deep and enthusiastic delight which the

perception of Beauty or Sublimity bestows, they afford us at last no higher enjoyment, than what arises from the observation of the servile dexterity of Art.

2. The effect of Familiarity, which has so often been observed, in diminishing our sensibility to the objects of Taste, may serve also as an illustration of the same principle. This effect indeed is generally resolved into the influence of habit, which in this, as in every other case, is supposed to diminish the strength of our emotions; yet that it is not solely to be ascribed to habit, seems evident from the following consideration, that such indifference is never permanent, and that there are times when the most familiar objects awaken us to the fullest sense of their beauty. The necessity which we are under of considering all such objects when familiar, in very different aspects from those in which they appear to us as objects of Beauty, and of attending only to their unaffecting qualities, may perhaps better

account both for this gradual decay of our sensibility, and for its temporary returns.

When a man of any taste, for instance, first settles in a romantic country, he is willing to flatter himself that he can never be satiated with its beauties, and that in their contemplation he shall continue to receive the same exquisite delight. The aspect in which he now sees them, is solely that in which they are calculated to produce Emotion. The streams are known to him only by their gentleness or their majesty, the woods by their solemnity, the rocks by their awfulness or terror. In a very short time, however, he is forced to consider them in very different lights. They are useful to him for some purposes, either of occupation or amusement. They serve as distinctions of different properties, or of different divisions of the country. They become boundaries or land-marks, by which his knowledge of the neighbourhood is ascertained. It is with these qualities that he

hears them usually spoken of by all who surround him. It is in this light that he must often speak and think of them himself. It is with these qualities, accordingly, that he comes at last insensibly to consider them, in the common hours of his life. Even a circumstance so trifling as the assignation of particular names, contributes in a great degree to produce this effect; because the use of such names, in marking the particular situation or place of such objects, naturally leads him to consider the objects themselves in no other light than that of their place or situation. It is with very different feelings that he must now regard the objects that were once so full of beauty. They now occur to his mind, only as topographical distinctions, and are beheld with the indifference such qualities naturally produce. Their majesty, their solemnity, their terror, &c. are gradually obscured, under the mass of unaffecting qualities with which he is obliged to consi-

der them; and excepting at those times when either their appearances or their expressions are new, or when some other incident has awakened that tone or temper of thought with which their expressions agree, and when of consequence he is disposed to consider them in the light of this expression alone, he must be content at last to pass his life without any perception of their beauty.

It is on the same account that the great and the opulent, become gradually so indifferent to those articles of elegance or magnificence with which they are surrounded, and which are so effectual in exciting the admiration of other men. The man of inferior rank, whose situation prevents him from all familiarity with such objects, sees them in the light of their magnificence and elegance alone; he sees them, too, as signs of that happiness and refined pleasure, which men in his condition so usually and so falsely attribute to those of elevated

rank; and he feels accordingly all that unmingled emotion of admiration which such expressions are fitted to produce. But the possessor must often see them in different lights. Whatever may be their elegance or their beauty, they still serve some end, or answer some purpose of his establishment. They are destined to some particular use, or are ornaments of some particular place: They are articles in the furniture of such a room, or ingredients in the composition of such a scene: They were designed by such an artist, executed after such a model, or cost such a sum of money. In such, or in some other equally uninteresting light, he must frequently be obliged both to speak and to think of them. In proportion as the habit of considering them in such a light increases, his disposition, or his opportunity to consider them as objects of Taste diminishes. Their elegance or their magnificence gradually disappears, until at last he comes to regard them (excepting at parti-

cular times) with no farther emotion, than what he receives from the common furniture of his house. The application of the same observation to many more important sources of our happiness, is too obvious to require any illustration.

There is no man, in like manner, acquainted with the history or the literature of antiquity, who has not felt his imagination inflamed by the most trifling circumstances connected with such periods. The names of the Ilyssus, the Tiber, the Forum, the Capitol, &c. have a kind of established grandeur in our apprehensions, because the only light in which we regard them, is that of their relation to those past scenes of greatness. No man, however, is weak enough to believe, that to the citizen of Athens, or of Rome, such names were productive of similar emotions. To him they undoubtedly conveyed no other ideas than those of the particular divisions of the city in which he dwelt, and were heard, of consequence,

with the same indifference that the citizen of London now hears of the Strand, or the Tower.

3. The influence of Fashion, in producing so frequent revolutions in the sentiments of men, with regard to the beauty of those objects to which it extends, and in disposing us to neglect or to despise at one time, the objects which we considered as beautiful before, may perhaps be explained upon the same principle. Fashion may be considered in general as the custom of the great. It is the dress, the furniture, the language, the manners of the great world which constitute what is called the Fashion in each of these articles, and which the rest of mankind are in such haste to adopt, after their example. Whatever the real beauty or propriety of these articles may be, it is not in this light that we consider them. They are the signs of that elegance and taste, and splendour, which is so liberally attributed to elevated rank; they are associated with

the consequence which such situations bestow; and they establish a kind of external distinction between this envied station, and those humble and mortifying conditions of life, to which no man is willing to belong. It is in the light therefore of this connection only, that we are disposed to consider them; and they accordingly affect us with the same emotion of delight, which we receive from the consideration of taste or elegance in more permanent instances. As soon, however, as this association is destroyed, as soon as the caprice or the inconstancy of the great have introduced other usages in their place, our opinion of their beauty is immediately destroyed. The quality which was formerly so pleasing or so interesting in them, the quality which alone we considered, is now appropriated to other objects, and our admiration readily transfers itself to those newer forms, which have risen into distinction from the same cause. The forsaken Fashion, whatever may be its real

or intrinsic beauty, falls, for the present at least, into neglect or contempt; because, either our admiration of it was founded only upon that quality which it has lost, or because it has now descended to the inferior ranks, and is of consequence associated with ideas of meanness and vulgarity. A few years bring round again the same Fashion. The same association attends it, and our admiration is renewed as before. It is on the same account, that they who are most liable to the seduction of Fashion, are people on whose minds the slighter associations have a strong effect. A plain man is incapable of such associations: a man of sense is above them; but the young and the frivolous, whose principles of Taste are either unformed, or whose minds are unable to maintain any settled opinions, are apt to lose sight of every other quality in such objects but their relation to the practice of the great, and of course, to suffer their sentiments of beauty to vary with the caprice

of this practice. It is the same cause which attaches the old to the fashions of their youth. They are associated with the memory of their better days, with a thousand recollections of happiness and gaiety, and heartfelt pleasures, which they experience now no more. The Fashions of modern times have no such pleasing associations to them. They are connected to them, only with ideas of thoughtless gaiety, or childish caprice. It is the Fashions of their youth alone, therefore, that they consider as beautiful.

III.

It may farther be observed, that the dependence of Taste upon Sensibility, or the necessity of some simple Emotion being excited, before the Beauty or Sublimity of any object is perceived, is so far from being remote from general observation, that it is the foundation of some of the most common judgments we form with regard to the characters of men.

1. When we are but slightly acquainted with any person, and have had no opportunities of knowing the particular nature of his sentiments or turn of mind, we never venture to pronounce, or even to guess with regard to his taste; and if, in such a stage of our acquaintance, we find that his opinions of Beauty are very different from our own, we are so far from being surprised at it, that we set ourselves very deliberately to account for it, either by recalling to mind those habits or occupations of his life which may have led him to different kinds of emotion, or by supposing that his natural sensibility is very different from our own. On the other hand, when we are well acquainted with any person, and know intimately the particular turn or sensibility of his mind, although we should never have happened to know his sentiments of Sublimity or Beauty, we yet venture very boldly to pronounce, whether any particular class of objects will affect him with such sentiments or not. The

foundation of our judgment, in such cases, is the agreement or disagreement of such objects, with the particular turn or character of his affections; and if we are well acquainted with the person, our judgment is seldom wrong. In the same manner, although we are altogether unacquainted with any person, yet if we are informed of his particular Taste, or of his favourite objects of Beauty or Sublimity, we not only feel ourselves disposed to conclude from thence, with regard to his particular turn or character of mind, but, if the instances are sufficiently numerous, we in general conclude right. It is scarcely possible for any man to read the works of a Poet, without forming some judgment of his character and affections as a man, or without concluding, that the magnanimity, the tenderness, the gaiety, or the melancholy, distinguished him in private life, which characterize the scenes or descriptions of his works. I am far from contending, that such judgments,

in general, are just; not only from the rashness with which they so commonly are formed, but still more in those cases where we reason from any person's Taste, from the impossibility of knowing whether this Taste is genuine, or whether it is founded upon some accidental associations. All that I mean to conclude is, that such judgments are a proof of the connection between Taste and Sensibility; and that they could not be formed, unless we found from experience, that no qualities affect us with the Pleasures of Taste, but such as are productive of some simple Emotion.

2. It is farther to be observed, that the sense of the dependence of the Emotions of Sublimity or Beauty, upon the accidental or temporary disposition of the mind, is also very strongly expressed, both in common conduct and in common conversation. To a man under some present impression of joy, we should not venture to appeal with regard to the Beauty of any melancholy or

pathetic composition. To a man under the dominion of sorrow, we should much less presume to present even the most beautiful composition, which contained only images of joy. In both cases, we should feel, that the compositions in question demanded different emotions from those that the persons had in their power to bestow; that while their present dispositions continued, there was no chance of the composition's being interesting to them; and if we really wished to know their opinions, we would naturally wait till we found them in such a disposition as was favourable to the emotions to which either of the compositions was addressed.

When any poem, or painting, or scene in nature peculiarly affects us, we are generally in haste to shew it to some friend, whose taste we know is similar to our own; and our minds are not fully satiated with its beauties, until we are able to unite with our own peculiar emotion, that pleasing

surprise which we participate with one to whom it is new, and that sentiment of gladness, which it is so natural to feel, when we find that we have been able to communicate delight. It sometimes happens, however, that the person to whom we shew it does not feel the pleasure we expected. In such a case, though we are a little surprised, we are not much disappointed. We tell him, that he happens not to be in the humour to be pleased; that at another time we are sure he will feel its beauty; and though we should not happen to know what is the peculiar cause of his indifference, we yet satisfy ourselves, that there is some cause which prevents him from the indulgence of the particular emotion which the scene or the composition demands, and which we know he is in general disposed to indulge. It happens, accordingly, if we are really well acquainted with the person, and if this beauty is not founded upon some particular association of our own, that our expecta-

tion is gratified, and that, when he returns to his ordinary temper of mind, he becomes sensible to all the beauty or sublimity which we had found in it. Many other instances of the same kind might be produced. In all cases, I think, where we discover in other people a weaker sense with regard to the beauty of particular objects than in ourselves, and when we can recollect no accidental association which may account for the superiority of our own emotion, we are naturally inclined to attribute it either to some temporary occupation or embarrassment of their minds when such objects were presented to them, or if we find that this was not the case, to some original deficiency in the sensibility of their hearts. To say that a man has no feelings of tenderness or magnanimity, accounts to us at once for his want of sensibility to the beauty of any actions or species of composition, which are founded on such emotions. In the same manner, to say that at any particular time

he was under the dominion of opposite feelings, as fully accounts to us for his insensibility at such a time to the beauty of such actions or compositions. I apprehend, that these very natural and very common judgments could not be formed, unless we found from experience, that those qualities only are felt as beautiful or sublime, which are found to produce emotion.

IV.

The proposition which I have now endeavoured to illustrate, might be illustrated from a variety of other considerations, and particularly from the nature of the Fine Arts. The object of these Arts is to produce the Emotions of Taste; and it might easily be shewn,

1. That the only subjects that are in themselves proper for the imitation of these Arts, are such as are productive of some species of Simple Emotion:

2. That when these subjects are of a con-

trary kind, the method by which alone they can be rendered either beautiful or sublime, is by the addition of some interesting or affecting quality:

3. That the extent, as well as the power of the different fine arts, in producing such emotions, is in proportion to the capacity which they afford the artist of making such additions; and that, in this respect, Poetry, by employing the instrument of language, by means of which it can express every quality of mind as well as of body, has a decided superiority over the rest of these arts, which are limited to the expression of the qualities of body alone.

These considerations, however, besides their being familiar to those who have reflected upon these subjects, would necessarily lead to discussions far beyond the limits of these Essays. The reader, who would wish to see some of these principles illustrated, will find it very fully and very

beautifully done in Dr Beattie's Essays upon Poetry and Music.

If the preceding illustrations are just: if it is found, that no qualities are felt, either as beautiful or sublime, but such as accord with the habitual or temporary sensibility of our minds; that objects of the most acknowledged beauty fail to excite their usual emotions, when we regard them in the light of any of their uninteresting or unaffecting qualities; and that our common judgments of the characters of men are founded upon this experience,—it seems that there can be no doubt of the truth of the proposition itself.

SECTION III.

If it is true, that those trains of thought which attend the Emotions of Taste, are uniformly distinguished by some general principles of connection, it ought to be found, that no Composition of objects or qualities in fact produces such emotions, in which this Unity of character or of emotion is not preserved. This proposition also may be illustrated from the most superficial review of the Principles of Composition, in the different Arts of Taste.

I.

There is no man of common Taste, who has not often lamented that confusion of expression which so frequently takes place, even in the most beautiful scenes of real Nature, and which prevents him from indulging to the full, the peculiar emotion

which the scene itself is fitted to inspire. The cheerfulness of the morning is often disturbed by circumstances of minute or laborious occupation,—the solemnity of noon by noise and bustling industry,—the tranquillity and melancholy of evening by vivacity and vulgar gaiety. It is seldom even that any unity of character is preserved among the inanimate objects of such scenery. The sublimest situations are often disfigured by objects that we feel unworthy of them,—by the traces of cultivation, or attempts towards improvement,—by the poverty of their woods, or of their streams, or some other of their great constituent features,—by appearances of uniformity or regularity, that almost induce the idea of art. The loveliest scenes, in the same manner, are frequently disturbed by unaccording circumstances;—by the signs of cultivation,—the regularity of inclosures,—the traces of manufactures, and, what is worse than all, by the presumptuous embellishments of fan-

tastic Taste. Amid this confusion of incidents, the general character of the scene is altogether lost: we scarcely know to what class of objects to give our attention; and having viewed it with astonishment, rather than with delight, we at last busy ourselves in imaginary improvements, and in conceiving what its beauty might be, if every feature were removed which now serves to interrupt its expression, and to diminish its effect.

What we thus attempt in imagination, it is the business of the art of Gardening to execute; and the great source of the superiority of its productions to the original scenes in nature, consists in the purity and harmony of its composition, in the power which the artist enjoys, to remove from his landscape whatever is hostile to its effect, or unsuited to its character, and, by selecting only such circumstances as accord with the general expression of the scene, to awaken an emotion more full, more simple,

and more harmonious, than any we can receive from the scenes of Nature itself.

It is by this rule, accordingly, that the excellence of all such compositions is determined. In real Nature, we often forgive, or are willing to forget slight inaccuracies or trifling inconsistencies; but in such productions of design, we expect and require more perfect correspondence. Every object that is not suited to the character of the scene, or that has not an effect in strengthening the expression by which it is distinguished, we condemn as an intrusion, and consider as a reproach upon the taste of the artist. When this expectation, on the contrary, is fully gratified, when the circumstances of the scenery are all such as accord with the peculiar emotion which the scene is fitted to inspire, when the hand of the artist disappears, and the embellishments of his fancy press themselves upon our belief, as the voluntary profusion of Nature, we immediately pronounce that the composition

is perfect; we acknowledge that he has attained the end of his art; and, in yielding ourselves up to the emotion which his composition demands, we afford him the most convincing mark of our applause. In the power which the art of gardening thus possesses, in common with the other fine arts, of withdrawing from its imitations whatever is inconsistent with their expression, and of adding whatever may contribute to strengthen, or to extend their effect, consists the great superiority which it possesses over the originals from which they are copied.

II.

The art of Landscape-painting is yet superior in its effect, from the capacity which the artist enjoys, of giving both greater extent and greater unity to his composition. In the art of gardening, the great materials of the scene are provided by Nature, and the artist must satisfy himself with that degree of expression which she has bestowed.

In a landscape, on the contrary, the painter has the choice of the circumstances he is to represent, and can give whatever force or extent he pleases to the expression he wishes to convey. In gardening, the materials of the scene are few, and those few unwieldy; and the artist must often content himself with the reflection, that he has given the best disposition in his power to the scanty and intractable materials of Nature. In a landscape, on the contrary, the whole range of scenery is before the eye of the painter. He may select from a thousand scenes, the circumstances which are to characterize a single composition, and may unite into one expression, the scattered features with which Nature has feebly marked a thousand situations. The momentary effects of light or shade, the fortunate incidents which chance sometimes throws in, to improve the expression of real scenery, and which can never again be recalled, he has it in his power to perpe-

tuate upon his canvas: Above all, the occupations of men, so important in determining, or in heightening the characters of Nature, and which are seldom compatible with the scenes of gardening, fall easily within the reach of his imitation, and afford him the means of producing both greater strength, and greater unity of expression, than is to be found either in the rude, or in the embellished state of real scenery.

While it is by the invention of such circumstances that we estimate the genius of the artist, it is by their Composition that his Taste is uniformly determined. The mere assemblage of picturesque incidents, the most unimproved Taste will condemn. Some general principle is universally demanded, some decided expression, to which the meaning of the several parts may be referred, and which, by affording us, as it were, the key of the scene, may lead us to feel, from the whole of the composition, that full and undisturbed emotion which we

are prepared to indulge. It is this purity and simplicity of composition, accordingly, which has uniformly distinguished the great masters of the art from the mere copiers of Nature. It is by their adherence to it, that their fame has been attained; and the names of Salvator and Claude Lorraine can scarcely be mentioned, without bringing to mind the peculiar character of their compositions, and the different emotions which their representations of Nature are destined to produce.

It is not, however, on our first acquaintance with this art, that we either discover its capacity, or feel its effects; and perhaps the progress of Taste, in this respect, may afford a further illustration of the great and fundamental Principle of Composition. What we first understand of painting is, that it is a simple art of imitation, and what we expect to find in it, is the representation of the common scenes of nature that surround us. It is with some degree of sur-

prise, accordingly, that we at first observe the different scenery with which the Painter presents us, and with an emotion rather of wonder, than of delight, that we gaze at a style of landscape, which has so little resemblance to the ordinary views to which we are accustomed. In the copy of a real scene, we can discover and admire the skill of the artist; but in the representation of desert or of desolate prospects, in appearances of Solitude or Tempest, we perceive no traces of imitation, and wonder only at the perversity of Taste, which could have led to the choice of so disagreeable subjects.

As soon, however, as from the progress of our own sensibility, or from our acquaintance with poetical composition, we begin to connect expression with such views of Nature, we begin also to understand and to feel the beauties of landscape-painting. It is with a different view that we now consider it. It is not for imitation we lo-

but for character. It is not the art, but the genius of the Painter, which now gives value to his compositions: and the language he employs is found not only to speak to the eye, but to affect the imagination and the heart. It is not now a simple copy which we see, nor is our Emotion limited to the cold pleasure which arises from the perception of accurate Imitation. It is a creation of Fancy with which the artist presents us, in which only the greater expressions of Nature are retained, and where more interesting emotions are awakened, than those which we experience from the usual tameness of common scenery. In the same proportion in which we thus discover the expression of landscape, we begin to collect the principles of its composition. The crowd of incidents which used to dazzle our earlier Taste, as expressive both of the skill and of the invention of the artist, begin to appear to us as inconsistence or confusion. When our hearts are affected, we

seek only for objects congenial to our emotion: and the Simplicity, which we used to call the Poverty of landscape, begins now to be welcome to us, as permitting us to indulge, without interruption, those interesting trains of thought which the character of the scene is fitted to inspire. As our knowledge of the expressions of Nature increases, our sensibility to the beauty or to the defects of composition becomes more keen, until at last our admiration attaches itself only to those greater productions of the art, in which one pure and unmingled character is preserved, and in which no feature is admitted, which may prevent it from falling upon the heart with one full and harmonious effect.

In this manner, the object of painting is no sooner discovered, than the unity of expression is felt to be the great secret of its power; the superiority which it at last assumes over the scenery of Nature, is found to arise, in one important respect, from the

greater purity and simplicity which its composition can attain; and perhaps this simple rule comprehends all that Criticism can prescribe for the regulation of this delightful art.

III.

But whatever may be the superiority of painting to the originals from which it is copied, it is still limited, in comparison of that which Poetry enjoys. The Painter addresses himself to the Eye. The Poet speaks to the Imagination. The Painter can represent no other qualities of Nature, but those which we discern by the sense of sight. The Poet can blend with those, all the qualities which we perceive by means of our other senses. The Painter can seize only one moment of existence, and can represent no other qualities of objects than what this single moment affords. The whole history of Nature is within the reach of the Poet, the varying appearances which

its different productions assume in the progress of their growth and decay, and the powerful effects which are produced by the contrast of these different aspects or expressions. The Painter can give to the objects of his scenery, only the visible and material qualities which are discerned by the eye, and must leave the interpretation of their expression to the imagination of the spectator; but the Poet can give direct expression to whatever he describes. All the sublimity and beauty of the moral and intellectual world are at his disposal; and, by bestowing on the inanimate objects of his scenery the characters and affections of mind, he can produce at once an expression which every capacity may understand, and every heart may feel. Whatever may be the advantage which painting enjoys, from the greater clearness and precision of its images, it is much more than balanced by the unbounded powers which the instrument of language affords to the Poet, both in

selection of the objects of his description, and in the decision of their expresion.

It is, accordingly, by the preservation of Unity of character or expression, that the excellence of poetical description is determined; and perhaps the superior advantages which the Poet enjoys, in the choice of his materials, renders our demand for its observance more rigid, than in any of the other arts of Taste. In real Nature, we willingly accommodate ourselves to the ordinary defects of scenery, and accept with gratitude those singular aspects in which some predominant character is tolerably preserved. In the compositions of Gardening, we make allowances for the narrow limits within which the invention of the artist is confined, and are dissatisfied only when great inconsistencies are retained. Even in painting, we are still mindful that it is the objects only of one sense that the artist can represent; and rather lament his restraints, than condemn his Taste, if our minds are not fully

impressed with the emotions he studies to raise, or if the different incidents of his composition do not fully accord in the degree, as well as in the nature of their expression. But the descriptions of the Poet can claim no such indulgence. With the capacity of blending in his composition the objects of every sense; with the past and the future, as well as the present, in his power; above all, with the mighty spell of mind at his command, with which he can raise every object that he touches into life and sentiment, we feel that he is unworthy of his art, if our imaginations are not satiated with his composition, and if in the chastity, as well as the power of his expression, he has not gratified the demand of our hearts.

It would be an unpleasing, and indeed an unnecessary task, to illustrate this observation by the defects or absurdities of Poets of inferior genius, or imperfect taste. It will perhaps be more useful, to produce

a few instances of description from some of the greatest Poets, in which very trifling circumstances serve to destroy, or at least to diminish their effect, when they do not fully coincide with the nature of the emotion which the descriptions are intended to raise.

In that fine passage in the second book of the Georgics, in which Virgil celebrates the praises of his native country, after these fine lines,

Hic ver assiduum atque alienis mensibus æstas.
Bis gravidæ pecudes, bis pomis utilis arbos:
At rabidæ tigres absunt, et sæva leonum
Semina, nec miseros fallunt aconita legentes,
Nec rapit immensos orbes per humum, neque tanto
Squameus in spiram tractu se colligit anguis.—

There is no reader whose enthusiasm is not checked by the cold and prosaic line which follows:

Adde tot egregias urbes, operumque laborem.

The tameness and vulgarity of the transition dissipates at once the emotion we had shared with the Poet, and reduces him, in our opinion, to the level of a mere describer.

The effect of the following nervous and beautiful lines in the conclusion of the same book, is nearly destroyed by a similar defect. After these lines,

Hanc olim veteres vitam coluere Sabini,
Hanc Remus et frater; sic fortis Etruria crevit,
Scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma.

We little expect the following spiritless conclusion:

Septemque una sibi muro circumdedit arces.

There is a still more surprising instance of this fault in one of the most pathetic passages of the whole poem, in the description of the disease among the cattle, which

concludes the third Georgic. The passage is as follows:

Ecce autem duro fumans sub vomere taurus
Concidit: *et mixtum spumis vomit ore cruorem.*
Extremosque ciet gemitus: it tristis arator
Mœrentem abjungens fraternâ morte juvencum,
Atque opere in medio defixa relinquit aratra.

The unhappy image in the second line is less calculated to excite compassion than disgust, and is singularly ill-suited to that tone of tenderness and delicacy which the poet has everywhere else so successfully maintained, in describing the progress of this loathsome disease.

In the speech of Agamemnon to Idomeneus, in the fourth book of the Iliad, a circumstance is introduced altogether inconsistent both with the dignity of the speech, and the majesty of Epic Poetry:

Divine Idomeneus! what thanks we owe
To worth like thine, what praise shall we bestow!

To Thee the foremost honours are decreed,
First in the fight, and every graceful deed.
For this, in banquets, when the generous bowls
Restore our blood, and raise the warriors souls.
Though all the rest with stated rules be bound,
Unmix'd, unmeasur'd are thy goblets crown'd.

Instances of the same defect may be found in the comparison of the sudden cure of Mars's wound to the coagulation of curds,—in that of Ajax retreating before the Trojans to an ass driven by boys from a field of corn,—in the comparison of an obstinate combat between the Greeks and the Trojans, to the stubborn struggle between two peasants, about the limits of their respective grounds,—in that of Ajax flying from ship to ship, to encounter the Trojans, to a horseman riding several horses at once, and showing his dexterity, by vaulting from one to another.

There is a similar fault in the two following passages from Milton, where the introduction of trifling and ludicrous cir-

stances diminishes the Beauty of the one, and the Sublimity of the other.

Now Morn her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam wak'd: *so custom'd, for his sleep*
Was airy light, from pure digestion bred,
And temp'rate vapours bland, which th' only sound
Of leaves, and fuming rills, Aurora's fan
Lightly dispers'd, and the shrill matin song
Of birds on every bough.

Book v.

They ended parle, and both address'd for fight
Unspeakable: for who, though with the tongue
Of angels, can relate, or to what things
Liken on earth conspicuous, that may lift
Human imagination to such height
Of godlike power? for likest gods they seem'd:
Stood they or mov'd, in stature, motion, arms,
Fit to decide the empire of great Heav'n.
Now wav'd their fiery swords, and in the air
Made horrid circles: two broad suns their shields
Blaz'd opposite, while expectation stood
In horror; *from each hand with speed retir'd,*
Where erst was thickest fight, th' angelic throng,
And left large field, unsafe within the wind
Of such commotion.

Book vi.

In the following passage from the sixth book of Lucan's Pharsalia, where he describes the incantations of the witch Erycto, and of whose voice he had before said with great sublimity,

> Omne nefas superi, prima jam voce precantis
> Concedunt, carmenque timent audire secundum—

in labouring to increase the terror of the reader he has rendered his description almost ludicrous, by accumulating images which serve only to confuse, and which in themselves have scarcely any other relation than that of mere noise.

> Tum vox Lethæos cunctis pollentior herbis
> Excantare Deos, confundit murmura primum
> Dissona, et humanæ multum discordia linguæ.
> Latratus habet illa canum, gemitusque luporum
> Quod trepidus bubo, quod strix nocturna queruntur,
> Quod strident, ululantque feræ, quod sibilat anguis,
> Exprimit, et planctus illisæ cautibus undæ
> Silvarumque sonum, fractæque tonitrua nubis;
> Tot rerum vox una fuit.——

Such a collection of unaccording images is scarcely less absurd than the following description of the Nightingale, by Marini:

Una voce pennuta, un suon' volante
E vestito di penne, un vivo fiato,
Una piuma canora, un canto alato,
Un spirituel che d' harmonia composto
Vive in anguste viscere nascosto.

Even less obvious inconsistencies are sufficient to diminish the effect of poetical description, when they do not perfectly coincide with the general emotion.

There is a circumstance introduced in the following passage from Horace, which is liable to this censure:

Solvitur acris Hyems, grata vice veris et Favoni,
Trahuntque siccas machinæ carinas,
Ac neque jam stabulis gaudet pecus, aut arator igni,
Nec prata canis albicant pruinis.
Jam Cytherea choros ducit Venus, imminente Luna
Junctæque Nymphis Gratiæ decentes
Alterno terram quatiunt pede.———

The image contained in the second line is obviously improper. It suggests ideas of labour, and difficulty, and art, and has no correspondence with that emotion of gladness with which we behold the return of the Spring, and which is so successfully maintained by the gay and pleasing imagery in the rest of the passage.

In a description of the morning, in the exquisite poem of the Minstrel, there is a circumstance to which the severity of Criticism might object upon the same principle:

> The cottage curs at early pilgrim bark,
> Crown'd with her pail, the tripping milkmaid sings,
> The whistling ploughman stalks afield, and, hark!
> Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings.

The image in the last line, though undoubtedly a striking one in itself, and very beautifully described, is yet improper, as it is inconsistent both with the period of society, and the scenery of the country to which the Minstrel refers.

There is a similar error in the following fine description from Shakespeare:

The current, that with gentle murmur glides,
Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth rage;
But when his fair course is not hindered,
He makes sweet music with the enamelled stones,
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage:
And so by many winding nooks he strays
With willing sport to the wild ocean.

The pleasing personification which we attribute to a brook, is founded upon the faint belief of voluntary motion, and is immediately checked, when the poet descends to any minute or particular resemblance.

Even in that inimitable description which Virgil has given of a storm, in the first book of the Georgics, a very accurate taste may perhaps discover some slight deficiencies;

Sæpe etiam immensum cœlo venit agmen aquarum,
Et fœdam glomerant tempestatem imbribus atris
Collectæ ex alto nubes. Ruit arduus æther
Et pluviâ ingenti sata læta, boumque labores,

Diluit. Implentur fossæ, et cava flumina crescunt
Cum sonitu, fervetque fretis spirantibus æquor.
Ipse pater, mediâ nimborum in nocte, coruscâ
Fulmina molitur dextrâ quo maxuma motu
Terra tremit: fugêre feræ, et mortalia corda
Per gentes humiles stravit pavor. Ille flagranti
Aut Atho, aut Rhodopen, aut alta Ceraunia telo
Dejicit: ingeminant Austri, et densissimus imber.

If there was any passage to which I would object in these wonderful lines, it would be to those that are marked in Italics. I acknowledge, indeed, that the "pluviâ in-"genti sata læta boumque labores diluit," is defensible from the connection of the imagery with the subject of the poem; but the "implentur fossæ" is both an unnecessary and a degrading circumstance, when compared with the magnificent effects that are described in the rest of the passage.

I shall conclude these illustrations with two passages, descriptive of the same scene, from different poets, in which the effects of imperfect and of harmonious composition are strikingly exemplified.

In the "Argonautica" of Apollonius Rhodius, when Medea is described in a state of deep agitation between her unwillingness to betray her father, and her desire to save her lover Jason, the anxiety of her mind is expressed by the following contrast, of which I give a literal translation:

"The night now covered the earth with "her shade; and in the open sea the pi- "lots, upon their decks, observed the star "of Orion. The travellers and the watch- "men slumbered. Even the grief of mo- "thers who had lost their children, was "suspended by sleep. In the cities there "was neither heard the cry of dogs, nor "the noise nor murmur of men. Silence "reigned in the midst of darkness. Medea "alone knew not the charms of this peace- "ful night, so deeply was her soul impres- "sed with fears for Jason."

Virgil describes a similar situation as follows:

Nox erat, et placidum carpebant fessa soporem
Corpora per terras, silvæque et sæva quierant
Æquora: quum medio volvuntur sidera lapsu
Quum tacet omnis ager: pecudes, pictæque volucres,
Quæque lacus late liquidos, quæque aspera dumis
Rura tenent, somno positæ sub nocte silenti
Lenibat curas, et corda oblita laborum;
At non infelix animi Phœnissa.

" On voït ici (says M. Marmontel, with " his usual taste and discernment), non " seulement la superiorité du talent, la vie, " et l'ame repandues dans une pöesie har- " monieuse, et du coloris le plus pur, mais " singulièrement encore la superiorité du " goût. Dans la peinture du poëte Grec, il " y a des details inutiles, il y en a des con- " traires à l'effet du tableau. Les observa- " tions des pilotes, dans le silence dé la " nuit, portent eux-mêmes le caractère de " la vigilance et de l'inquietude, et ne con- " trastent point avec le trouble de Medée. " L'image d'une mere qui a perdu ses en- " fants est faite pour distraire de celle d'une " amante; elle en affoiblit l'intérêt, et le

" poëte en la lui opposant, est allé contre " son dessein ; au lieu que, dans le tableau " de Virgile, tout est réduit à l'unité. C'est " la nature entière, dans le calme et dans le " sommeil, tandis que la malheureuse Di- " don veille seule, et se livre en proie à tous " les tourments de l'amour. Enfin, dans le " poëte Grec, le cri des chiens, le sommeil " des portiers, sont des details minutieux et " indignes de l'epopée, au lieu que dans " Virgile tout est noble et peint à grands " traits: huit vers embrassent la nature." —*Encyclopedie, voc.* IMITATION.

In these illustrations of the necessity of unity of expression, for the production of the Emotions of Sublimity and Beauty, I have chiefly confined myself to such instances in poetry, as are descriptive of natural scenery, because they are most within the observation of that class of readers, to whom any illustrations of this point are necessary. The same principle extends, with equal force, to every other branch of

poetical imitation, to the description of the characters, the sentiments, and the passions of men: And one great source of the superiority which such imitations have over the originals from which they are copied, consists in these cases, as well as the former, in the power which the artist enjoys, of giving an unity of character to his descriptions, which is not to be found in real Nature. The illustration of this point, however, as well as of the general fact, that all such descriptions are defective, in which this unity is not preserved, I must leave to the reader's own observation. In the same view, I leave the consideration of the effect of Contrast; a principle which may at first seem adverse to these conclusions, but which, in fact, is one of the strongest confirmations of them. The reader who is accustomed to such speculations, need not be reminded, that the real end of Contrast is to strengthen the effect of the general Emotion,—that its propriety is determined by

the nature of that Emotion,—that it is justly applied only in those cases where the Emotion is violent and demands relief, or faint and requires support, or long-continued and needs repose,—and that in all cases where it exceeds these limits, or where it does not serve to invigorate the character of the Composition, it serves only to obstruct or to diminish its effect; and the reader to whom these principles are new, may find amusement in verifying them.

IV.

The Unity of character which is thus demanded in poetical description, for the production of the Emotions of Taste, is demanded also in every species of poetical Composition, whatever may be its extent.

In describing the events of life, it is the business of the historian to represent them as they really happened; to investigate their causes, however minute; and to report the motives of the actors, however

base or mean. In a poetical representation of such events, no such confusion is permitted to appear. A representation destined by its nature to affect, must not only be founded upon some great or interesting subject, but, in the management of this subject, such means only must be employed as are fitted to preserve, and to promote the interest and the sympathy of the reader. The Historian who should relate the voyage of Æneas, and the foundation of Rome, must of necessity relate many trifling and uninteresting events, which could be valuable only from their being true. The Poet who should attempt this subject, must introduce only pathetic or sublime events,—must unfold their connection with greater clearness,—must point out their consequences as of greater moment,—and must spread over all that tone and character of dignity which we both expect and demand in a composition, destined to excite the sensibility, and to awaken the admiration

of mankind. Even that species of poem which has been called by the Critics the Historical Epic, and which is only a poetical narration of real events, is yet in some measure subjected to the same rule; and though we do not expect from it the sublime machinery, or the artful conduct of the real Epic, we yet demand a more uniform tone of elevation, and a purer and more dignified selection of incidents, than from the strict narrative of real history. In both, the Poet assumes the character of a person deeply impressed with the magnitude or the interest of the story he relates. To impress his reader with similar sentiments, is the end and object of his work; and he can no otherwise do this, than by presenting to his mind only such incidents as accord with these great emotions, by leaving out whatever in the real history of the event may be mean or uninteresting, and by the invention of every circumstance that, while it is consistent with probability, may

raise the subject of his work into greater importance in his esteem. That it is by this rule accordingly the conduct of the Epic Poem is determined, is too obvious to require any illustration.

The same Unity of emotion is demanded in Dramatic Poetry, at least in the highest and noblest species of it, Tragedy; and in the conduct of the Drama, this unity of character is fully as essential as any of those three unities, of which every book of Criticism is so full. If it is painful to us, when we are deeply engaged in some great interest, to turn our minds to the consideration of some other event, it is fully as painful to us, in the midst of our admiration or our sympathy, and while our hearts are swelling with tender or with elevated emotions, to descend to the consideration of minute, or mean, or unimportant incidents, however naturally they may be connected with the story, or however much we may be convinced that they actually took place. The

envy which Elizabeth entertained of the beauty of Mary of Scotland, was certainly one cause, and probably a great cause of the distresses of that most unfortunate Queen; but if a Poet, in a tragedy founded upon her pathetic story, should introduce the scene which Melville describes in his Memoirs, and in which the weakness of Elizabeth is so apparent, we should consider it both as degrading to the dignity of Tragedy, and unsuited to the nature of the emotion which the story is fitted to raise. It is hence that Tragi-Comedy is utterly indefensible, after all that has been said in its defence. If it is painful to us in such cases to descend to the consideration of indifferent incidents, it is a thousand times more painful to be forced to attend to those that are ludicrous; and there is no man of the most common sensibility, who does not feel his mind revolt, and his indignation kindle at the absurdity of the Poet, who can thus break in upon the sacred retirement of his

sorrow, with the intolerable noise of vulgar mirth. Had the taste of Shakespeare been equal to his genius, or had his knowledge of the laws of the Drama corresponded to his knowledge of the human heart, the effect of his compositions would not only have been greater than it now is, but greater perhaps than we can well imagine; and had he attempted to produce through a whole composition, that powerful and uniform interest which he can raise in a single scene, nothing of that perfection would have been wanting of which we may conceive this sublime art to be capable.

Of the necessity of this Unity of Emotion, Corneille is the first Tragedian of modern Europe who seems to have been sensible; and I know not whether the faults of this Poet have not been exaggerated by English Critics, from their inattention to the end which he seems to have prescribed to himself in his works. To present a faithful picture of human life, or of human pas-

sions, seems not to have been his conception of the intention of Tragedy. His object, on the contrary, seems to have been, to exalt and to elevate the imagination; to awaken only the greatest and noblest passions of the human mind; and, by presenting such scenes and such events alone, as could most powerfully promote this end, to render the theatre a school of sublime instruction, rather than an imitation of common life. To effect this purpose, he was early led to see the necessity, or disposed by the greatness of his own mind to the observation, of an uniform character of dignity; to disregard whatever of common, of trivial, or even of pathetic in the originals from which he copied, might serve to interrupt this peculiar flow of emotion; and instead of giving a simple copy of Nature, to adorn the events he represented, with all that eloquence and poetry could afford. He maintains, accordingly, in all his best plays, amid much exaggeration, and much of the

false eloquence of his time, a tone of commanding, and even of fascinating dignity, which disposes us almost to believe, that we are conversing with Beings of an higher order than our own; and which blinds us, at least for a time, to all the faults and all the imperfections of his composition. I am far from being disposed to defend his opinions of Tragedy, and still less to excuse his extravagance and bombast; but I conceive, that no person can feel his beauties, or do justice to his merits, who does not regard his tragedies in this view; and I think that some allowance ought to be made for the faults of a Poet, who first shewed to his country the example of regular Tragedy, and whose works the great Prince of Condé called "The Breviary of Kings."

In the former Section, I have endeavoured to show, that no objects are in themselves fitted to produce the Emotions of Sublimity or Beauty, which are not productive of some simple emotion. In this, I have at-

tempted to show, that no Composition of objects or qualities is in fact productive of such emotions, in which an Unity of Character is not preserved. The slight illustrations which I have now offered, are probably sufficient to point out the truth of the general principle; but the application of it to the different Arts of Taste, and the explanation of the great rules of Composition from this constitution of our nature, are objects far beyond the limits of these Essays. I must satisfy myself, therefore, with observing in general, that, in all the Fine Arts, that Composition is most excellent, in which the different parts most fully unite in the production of one unmingled Emotion; and that Taste the most perfect, where the perception of this relation of objects, in point of expression, is most delicate and precise.

CONCLUSION.

I.

THE illustrations in the first Chapter of this Essay are intended to shew, that whenever the emotions of Beauty or Sublimity are felt, that exercise of Imagination is produced which consists in the prosecution of a train of thought.

The illustrations in the second Chapter are intended to point out the distinction between such trains, and our ordinary trains of thought, and to show, that this difference consists, 1*st*, In the ideas which compose them being in all cases Ideas of Emotion; and, 2*dly*, In their possessing an uniform principle of connection through the whole of the train. The effect, therefore, which is produced upon the mind, by objects of Taste, may be considered as consisting in

the production of a regular or consistent train of Ideas of Emotion.

II.

The account which I have now given of this effect, may perhaps serve to point out an important distinction between the Emotions of Taste, and all our different Emotions of Simple Pleasure. In the case of these last emotions, no additional train of thought is necessary. The pleasurable feeling follows immediately the presence of the object or quality, and has no dependence upon anything for its perfection, but the sound state of the sense by which it is received. The Emotions of Joy, Pity, Benevolence, Gratitude, Utility, Propriety, Novelty, &c. might undoubtedly be felt, although we had no such power of mind as that by which we follow out a train of ideas, and certainly are felt in a thousand cases, when this faculty is unemployed.

In the case of the Emotions of Taste, on

the other hand, it seems evident that this exercise of mind is necessary, and that unless this train of thought is produced, these emotions are unfelt. Whatever may be the nature of that simple emotion which any object is fitted to excite, whether that of Gaiety, Tranquillity, Melancholy, &c. if it produce not a train of kindred thought in our minds, we are conscious only of that simple Emotion. Whenever, on the contrary, this train of thought, or this exercise of imagination is produced, we are conscious of an emotion of a higher and more pleasing kind; and which, though it is impossible to describe in language, we yet distinguish by the name of the Emotion of Taste. If accordingly the Author of our nature had denied us this faculty of Imagination, it should seem that these emotions could not have been felt, and that all our emotions would have been limited to those of simple pleasure.

The Emotions of Taste may therefore be

considered as distinguished from the Emotions of Simple Pleasure, by their being dependent upon the exercise of our Imagination; and though founded in all cases upon some simple Emotion, as yet further requiring the employment of this faculty for their existence.

III.

As in every operation of Taste there are thus two different faculties employed, *viz.* some affection or emotion raised, and the imagination excited to a train of thought corresponding to this emotion, the peculiar pleasure which attends, and which constitutes the Emotions of Taste, may naturally be considered as composed of the pleasures which separately attend the exercise of these faculties, or, in other words, as produced by the union of pleasing Emotion, with the pleasure which, by the constitution of our nature, is annexed to the exercise of Imagination. That both these pleasures are felt

in every operation of Taste, seems to me very agreeable to common experience and observation.

1. That in every case of the Emotions of Sublimity or Beauty, that simple Emotion of pleasure is felt, which arises from the peculiar nature of the object perceived, every man, I conceive, may very easily satisfy himself. In any beautiful object, whose character is Cheerfulness, we are conscious of a feeling of cheerfulness,—in objects of Melancholy, of a feeling of sadness,—in objects of Utility, of a feeling of Satisfaction and Complacence, similar to what we feel from objects of the same kind, when the Emotion of Beauty is not excited. In sublime objects, in the same manner, whatever their character may be, whether that of Greatness, Terror, Power, &c. we are conscious of the feelings of Admiration, of Awe, of Humility, &c. and of the same pleasures from the exercise of them, which we feel in those cases where the Emotion

of Sublimity is not produced. In the trains of thought which are excited by objects either of Sublimity or Beauty, every man knows, that the character of those trains is determined by the peculiar nature of the object; and instead of the Emotions of Taste being attended with one uniform species of pleasure, every man must have felt, that the sum of his pleasure is in a great degree composed of the peculiar pleasure which the exercise of different affections brings.

2. That there is a pleasure also annexed, by the constitution of our nature, to the exercise of imagination, is a proposition which seems to require very little illustration. In common opinion, the employment of imagination is always supposed to communicate delight; when we yield to its power, we are considered as indulging in a secret pleasure; and every superiority in the strength or sensibility of this faculty is believed to be attended with a similar

increase in the happiness of human life. Nor is this persuasion of the connection of pleasure with the exercise of imagination confined to those cases where the mind is employed in contemplating only images of joy; for even in those men whose constitution disposes them to gloomy or melancholy thought, we have still a belief that there is some secret and fascinating charm in the disposition which they indulge, and that, in this operation of mind itself, they find a pleasure which more than compensates for all the pain which the character of their thoughts may bring. There is a state of mind, also, which every man must have felt, when, without any particular object of meditation, the imagination seems to retire from the realities of life, and to wander amid a creation of its own; when the most varied and discordant scenes rise as by enchantment before the mind; and when all the other faculties of our nature seem gradually to be obscured, to give to

this creation of Fancy a more radiant glow. With what delight such employments of imagination are attended, the young and the romantic can tell, to whom they are often more dear than all the real enjoyments of life; and who, from the noise and tumult of vulgar joy, often hasten to retire to solitude and silence, where they may yield with security to these illusions of imagination, and indulge again their visionary bliss.

On a subject of this kind, however, when illustration is perhaps less important than description, I am happy to be able to transcribe a passage, which will render unnecessary every illustration that I can give. It is a passage from a posthumous work of M. Rousseau, in which he describes his mode of life, during a summer which he passed in the island of St Pierre, in the middle of the little lake of Bienne.

"Quand le beau tems m'invitoit, j'allois "me jetter seul dans un bateau que je "conduisois au milieu du lac, quand l'eau

" étoit calme, et là, m'étendant tout de mon
" long dans le bateau, les yeux tournés vers
" le ciel, je me laissois aller et dériver len-
" tement au gré de l'eau, quelquefois pen-
" dant plusieurs heures, plongé dans mille
" rêveries confuses, mais délicieuses, et qui
" sans avoir aucun objet bien déterminé ni
" constant, ne laissoient pas d'être à mon
" gré cent fois préférables à tout ce que
" j'avois trouvé de plus doux dans ce qu'on
" appelle les plaisirs de la vie.——

" ——Quand le soir approchoit, je des-
" cendois des cimes de l'isle, et j'allois vo-
" lontiers m'asseoir au bord du lac, sur la
" grève dans quelque asyle caché; là le
" bruit des vagues, et l'agitation de l'eau
" fixant mes sens, et chassant de mon ame
" toute autre agitation, la plongeoient dans
" une rêverie délicieuse, où la nuit me sur-
" prenoit souvent sans que je m'en fusse
" apperçu. Le flux et reflux de cette eau,
" son bruit continu, mais renflé par inter-
" valles, frappant sans relâche mon oreille

" et mes yeux, suppléoient au mouvemens
" internes que la rêverie éteignoit en moi,
" et suffisoient pour me faire sentir avec
" plaisir mon éxistence, sans prendre la
" peine de penser.——

" ——Tel est l'état où je me suis trouvé
" souvent à l'isle de St Pierre dans mes rê-
" veries solitaires, soit couché dans mon
" bateau que je laissois dériver au grè de
" l'eau, soit assis sur les rives du lac agité,
" soit ailleurs au bord d'une belle rivière,
" ou d'un ruisseau murmurant sur le gra-
" vier. Telle est la manière dont j'ai pas-
" sé mon tems, durant le séjour que j'y ai
" fait. Qu'on me dise à present ce qu'il y
" a là d'assez attrayant pour exciter dans
" mon cœur de regrèts si vifs, si tendres,
" et si durables, qu'au bout de quinze ans
" il m'est impossible de songer à cette ha-
" bitation cherie, sans m'y sentir à chaque
" fois transporter encore par les élans du
" desir.——

" ——J'ai pensé quelquefois assez pro-

" fondement, mais rarement avec plaisir,
" presque toujours contre mon grè, et com-
" me par force; la rêverie me delasse et
" m'amuse, la reflexion me fatigue et m'at-
" triste. Quelquefois mes rêveries finissent
" par meditation, mais plus souvent mes me-
" ditations finissent par la rêverie; et durant
" ces égaremens mon ame erre et plâne
" dans l'univers sur les aîles de l'imagina-
" tion, dans des éxtases qui passent toute
" autre jouissance.

" Tant que je goutai celle-la dans toute
" sa pureté, toute autre occupation me fut
" toujours insipide. Mais quand une fois,
" jetté dans la carrière littéraire, par des
" impulsions étrangers, je sentis la fatigue
" du travail d'esprit, et l'importunité d'une
" célebrité malheureuse, je sentis en même
" tems languir et s'attiédir mes douces rê-
" veries, et bientôt forcé de m'occuper
" malgrè moi de ma triste situation, je ne
" pus plus retrouver, que bien rarement, ces
" chères éxtases, qui durant cinquante ans

" m'avoient tenu lieu de fortune et de " gloire; et sans autre dépense que celle du " tems, m'avoient rendu dans l'oisieveté le " plus heureux des mortels."—*Les Rêveries, Promenade 5. et 7.*

If it is allowed, then, that there is a pleasure annexed, by the constitution of our nature, to the Exercise of Imagination; and if the illustrations in the first chapter are just, which are intended to shew, that when this exercise of mind is not produced, the Emotions of Taste are unfelt, and that when it is increased, these Emotions are increased with it, we seem to possess sufficient evidence to conclude, that this Pleasure exists, and forms a part of that peculiar pleasure which we receive from objects of Sublimity and Beauty.

The pleasure, therefore, which accompanies the Emotions of Taste, may be considered not as a simple, but as a complex pleasure; and as arising not from any separate and peculiar Sense, but from the

union of the pleasure of SIMPLE EMOTION with that which is annexed, by the constitution of the human mind, to the Exercise of IMAGINATION.

IV.

The distinction which thus appears to subsist between the Emotions of Simple Pleasure, and that complex pleasure which accompanies the Emotions of Taste, seems to require a similar distinction in philosophical language. I believe, indeed, that the distinction is actually to be found in the common language of conversation; and I apprehend that the term DELIGHT is very generally used to express the peculiar pleasure which attends the Emotions of Taste, in contradistinction to the general term Pleasure, which is appropriated to Simple Emotion. We are *pleased*, we say, with the gratification of any appetite or affection,—with food when hungry, and with rest when tired,—with the gratification of

Curiosity, of Benevolence, or of Resentment. But we say, we are *delighted* with the prospect of a beautiful landscape, with the sight of a fine statue, with hearing a pathetic piece of music, with the perusal of a celebrated poem. In these cases, the term Delight is used to denote that pleasure which arises from Sublimity and Beauty, and to distinguish it from those simpler pleasures which arise from objects that are only agreeable. I acknowledge, indeed, that this distinction is not very accurately adhered to in common language, because, in most cases, either of the terms equally expresses our meaning; but I apprehend, that the observation of it is sufficiently general, to shew some consciousness in mankind of a difference between these pleasures, and to justify such a distinction in philosophical language as may express it.

If it were permitted me therefore, I should wish to appropriate the term Delight, to signify the peculiar pleasure which attends

the Emotions of TASTE, or which is felt, WHEN THE IMAGINATION IS EMPLOYED IN THE PROSECUTION OF A REGULAR TRAIN OF IDEAS OF EMOTION.

ESSAY II.

OF THE

SUBLIMITY AND BEAUTY

OF THE

MATERIAL WORLD.

ESSAY II.

OF THE SUBLIMITY AND BEAUTY OF THE MATERIAL WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

If the illustrations in the preceding Essay are just, if that exercise of mind which takes place when the Emotions of Beauty or Sublimity are felt consists in the prosecution of a regular train of Ideas of Emotion, and if no other objects are in fact productive of the Emotions of Taste, but such as are fitted to produce some simple Emotion, there arises a question of some difficulty, and of very considerable importance, *viz.* What is the

source of the SUBLIMITY and BEAUTY of the MATERIAL WORLD?

It cannot be doubted, that many objects of the Material World are productive of the Emotions of Sublimity and Beauty: some of the fine arts are altogether employed about material objects; and far the greater part of the instances of Beauty or Sublimity which occur in every man's experience, are found in matter, or in some of its qualities.

On the other hand, I think it must be allowed, that Matter in itself is unfitted to produce any kind of emotion. The various qualities of matter are known to us only by means of our external senses; but all that such powers of our nature convey, is Sensation and Perception; and whoever will take the trouble of attending to the effect which such qualities, when simple and unassociated, produce upon his mind, will be satisfied, that in no case do they produce Emotion, or the exercise of any of his

affections. The common language of mankind upon this subject, perfectly coincides with this observation. Such qualities, when simple, are always spoken of as producing sensation, but in no case as producing emotion; and although perhaps the general word Feeling (as applied both to our external and internal senses) may sometimes be used ambiguously, yet if we attend to it, we shall find, that, with regard to material qualities, it is uniformly used to express Sensation, and that, if we substitute Emotion for it, every man will perceive the mistake. The smell of a rose, the colour of scarlet, the taste of a pine-apple, when spoken of merely as qualities, and abstracted from the objects in which they are found, are said to produce agreeable Sensations, but not agreeable Emotions. In the same manner, the smell of asafœtida, or the taste of aloes, when spoken of as abstract qualities, are uniformly said to produce unpleasing Sensations, but not unpleasing Emotions. If

we could conceive ourselves possessed only of those powers which we have by means of our external senses, I apprehend there can be no doubt, that, in such a case, the qualities of matter would produce only sensation and perception: that such sensations might be either pleasing or painful, but that in no case could they be attended with any emotion.

But although the qualities of matter are in themselves incapable of producing emotion, or the exercise of any affection, yet it is obvious that they may produce this effect, from their association with other qualities; and as being either the signs or expression of such qualities as are fitted by the constitution of our nature to produce Emotion. Thus, in the human body, particular forms or colours are the signs of particular passions or affections. In works of art, particular forms are the signs of Dexterity, of Taste, of Convenience, of Utility. In the works of nature, particular sounds and

colours, &c. are the signs of Peace, or Danger, or Plenty, or Desolation, &c. In such cases, the constant connection we discover between the sign and the thing signified, between the material quality and the quality productive of Emotion, renders at last the one expressive to us of the other, and very often disposes us to attribute to the sign, that effect which is produced only by the quality signified.

That such associations are formed with material qualities, every man has sufficient evidence in his own experience; and there are many causes which may be assigned, both of the extent and of the universality of such associations. I shall remark a few of these, without pretending to an accurate enumeration.

1. All those external objects, which, from their nature or constitution, are productive to us, either of use, of convenience, or of pleasure, or which in any other way are

fitted to produce Emotion, are known and distinguished by their qualities of form and colour. Such qualities, therefore, are naturally, and even necessarily expressive to us of those uses, or conveniencies, or pleasures. It is by them that we become acquainted with the subjects from which such utilities arise; it is by them that we learn to distinguish such subjects from one another; and as they are the permanent signs of these several utilities, they affect us with the same emotion which the utilities signified by them are fitted to produce. The material qualities, for instance, which distinguish a ship, a plough, a printing-press, or a musical instrument, do not solely afford us the perception of certain colours or forms, but along with this perception, bring with it the conception of the different uses or pleasures which such compositions of material qualities produce, and excite in us the same Emotion with the uses or pleasures thus

signified. As, in this manner, the utilities or pleasures of all external objects are expressed to us by their material signs of Colour and of form, such signs are naturally productive of the Emotions which properly arise from the qualities signified.

2. The qualities of Design, of Wisdom, of Skill, are uniformly expressed to us by certain qualities of Form, and certain compositions of Forms, Colours, and Sounds. Such qualities, therefore, or compositions of qualities, become the signs of Design, or Wisdom, or Skill, and, like all other signs, affect us with the same Emotion we receive from the qualities signified.

3. All our knowledge of the minds of other men, and of their various qualities, is gained by means of material signs. Power, Strength, Wisdom, Fortitude, Justice, Benevolence, Magnanimity, Gentleness, Tenderness, Love, &c. are all known to us by means of the external signs of them in the Countenance, Gesture, or Voice. Such material signs are

therefore very early associated in our minds with the qualities they signify; and as they are constant and invariable, become soon productive to us of the same Emotions with the qualities themselves.

In the same manner, the Characters, the Dispositions, the Instincts of all the various tribes of animals, are known to us by certain signs in their frame, or voice, or gesture. Such signs become therefore expressive to us of these Characters, or Instincts, or Dispositions, and affect us with all the Emotions which such qualities are fitted to produce.

4. Besides these immediate expressions of qualities of Mind by material signs, there are others which arise from Resemblance, in which the qualities of matter become significant to us of some affecting or interesting quality of Mind. We learn from experience, that certain qualities of Mind are signified by certain qualities of body. When we find similar qualities of body in inanimate Matter, we are apt to attribute to them

the same expression, and to conceive them as signifying the same qualities in this case, as in those cases where they derive their expression immediately from Mind. Thus, Strength and Delicacy, Coldness and Modesty, Old Age and Youth, &c. are all expressed by particular material signs in the human form, and in many cases by similar signs in the forms of animals. When we find similar appearances in the forms of inanimate Matter, we are disposed to consider them as expressive of the same qualities, and to regard them with similar Emotions. The universality of such associations is evident from the structure of the rudest languages. The Strength of the Oak, the delicacy of the Myrtle, the boldness of a Rock, the modesty of the Violet, &c. are expressions common in all languages, and so common, that they are scarcely in any considered as figurative; yet every man knows, that Strength and Weakness, Boldness and Modesty, are qualities, not of Matter, but of

Mind, and that without our knowledge of Mind, it is impossible that we should ever have had any conception of them. How much the effect of descriptions of natural scenery arises from that personification which is founded upon such associations, I believe there is no man of common taste who must not often have been sensible.

5. We are led by the constitution of our nature, also, to perceive resemblances between our Sensations and Emotions, and of consequence between the objects that produce them. Thus, there is some analogy between the sensation of gradual Ascent, and the Emotion of Ambition,—between the Sensation of gradual Descent, and the Emotion of Decay,—between the lively Sensation of Sunshine, and the cheerful Emotion of Joy,—between the painful Sensation of Darkness, and the dispiriting Emotion of Sorrow. In the same manner, there are analogies between Silence and Tranquillity,—between the lustre of Morning, and

the gaiety of Hope,—between softness of Colouring, and gentleness of Character,—between slenderness of Form, and delicacy of mind, &c. The objects, therefore, which produce such Sensations, though in themselves not the immediate signs of such interesting or affecting qualities, yet in consequence of this Resemblance, become gradually expressive of them, and if not always, yet at those times at least, when we are under the dominion of any Emotion, serve to bring to our minds the images of all those affecting or interesting qualities, which we have been accustomed to suppose they resemble. How extensive this source of Association is, may easily be observed in the extent of such kinds of figurative expression in every language.

6. Besides these, Language itself is another very important cause of the extent of such Associations. The analogies between the qualities of Matter, and the qualities of Mind, which any individual might discover

or observe, might perhaps be few, and must of course be limited by his situation and circumstances; but the use of Language gives, to every individual who employs it, the possession of all the analogies which so many ages have observed, between material qualities, and qualities capable of producing Emotion. Of how much consequence this is, may be discovered in the different impressions which are made by the same objects on the common people, whose vocabulary is limited by their wants, and on those who have had the advantage of a liberal education.

7. To all these sources of Association is to be added, that which is peculiar to every individual. There is no man, almost, who has not, from accident, from the events of his life, or from the nature of his studies, connected agreeable or interesting Recollections with particular Colours, or Sounds, or Forms, and to whom such sounds or colours, &c. are not pleasing from such an

Association. They affect us, in some measure, as the signs of these interesting qualities, and, as in other cases, produce in us the same Emotion with the qualities they signify.

These observations are probably sufficient to show the numerous and extensive associations we have with Matter, and its various qualities, as well as to illustrate some of the means by which it becomes significant or expressive to us of very different, and far more interesting qualities than those it possesses in itself. By means of the Connection, or Resemblance, which subsists between the qualities of Matter, and qualities capable of producing Emotion, the perception of the one immediately, and very often irresistibly, suggests the idea of the other; and so early are these Associations formed, that it requires afterwards some pains to separate this connection, and to prevent us from attributing to the Sign,

that effect which is produced alone by the Quality signified.

Whatever may be the truth of these observations, it cannot at least be doubted, that the qualities of Matter are often associated with others, and that they affect us in such cases, like all other signs, by leading our imaginations to the qualities they signify. It seems to be equally obvious, that in all cases where Matter, or any of its qualities, produces the Emotions of Sublimity or Beauty, this effect must arise either from these Material Qualities themselves, from their being fitted by the constitution of our nature to produce such Emotions; or from some other qualities with which they are associated, and of which they operate as the Signs or Expressions.

It should seem, therefore, that a very simple, and a very obvious principle is sufficient to guide our investigation into the source of the sublimity and beauty of the

qualities of Matter. If these qualities are in themselves fitted to produce the Emotions of Sublimity or Beauty (or, in other words, are in themselves beautiful or sublime), I think it is obvious that they must produce these Emotions, independently of any association. If, on the contrary, it is found that these qualities only produce such Emotions when they are associated with interesting or affecting qualities, and that when such associations are destroyed, they no longer produce the same emotions, I think it must also be allowed that their Beauty or Sublimity is to be ascribed, not to the material, but to the associated qualities.

That this is in reality the case, I shall endeavour to show, by a great variety of illustrations. It is necessary, however, for me to premise, that I am very far from considering the Inquiries which follow, as a complete examination of the subject. They are indeed only detached observations on the

Sublimity and Beauty of some of the most important classes of material qualities, but which, however imperfect they may severally be, yet seem to possess considerable weight from their collective evidence.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Sublimity and Beauty of Sound.

THE Senses by which we chiefly discover Beauty or Sublimity in material objects, are those of HEARING and SEEING.

The objects of the first are, SOUNDS, whether SIMPLE or COMPOSED.

The objects of the second are, COLOURS, FORMS, and MOTION.

SECTION I.

Of Simple Sounds.

I SHALL begin with considering some of those instances, where simple sounds are productive of the Emotions of Sublimity or Beauty. Such sounds are capable of many divisions. It may be sufficient, at present, to consider them in the following order:

1. Sounds that occur in inanimate Nature.
2. The Notes of Animals. And,
3. The Tones of the Human Voice.

PART I.

Of Miscellaneous Sounds.

OF the first class, or of those Miscellaneous Sounds that occur in inanimate Na-

ture, there are many which produce Emotions of Sublimity and Beauty.

I.

1. All sounds in general are SUBLIME, which are associated with Ideas of Danger; the howling of a storm,—the murmuring of an Earthquake,—the Report of Artillery,—the Explosion of Thunder, &c.

2. All sounds are in general Sublime, which are associated with Ideas of great Power or Might; the noise of a Torrent,—the Fall of a Cataract,—the Uproar of a Tempest,—the Explosion of Gunpowder,—the Dashing of the Waves, &c.

3. All sounds, in the same manner, are Sublime, which are associated with Ideas of Majesty or Solemnity, or deep Melancholy, or any other strong Emotion; the Sound of the Trumpet, and all other warlike instruments,—the Note of the Organ,—the Sound of the Curfew,—the Tolling of the passing Bell, &c.

That the Sublimity of such sounds arises from the Ideas of Danger or Power, or Majesty, &c. which are associated with them, and not from the Sounds themselves, or from any original fitness in such sounds to produce this Emotion, seems to be obvious from the following considerations:

1. Such sounds, instead of having any permanent or definite Character of Sublimity, vary in their effect with the qualities they happen to express, and assume different characters, according to the nature of these qualities.

If sounds in themselves were Sublime, it might reasonably be expected in this, as in every other case of sense, that their difference of effect would be strictly proportioned to their difference of character, and that Sounds of the same kind or character would invariably produce the same Emotion. The following instances, however, seem to show, that no specific character of Sublimity belongs to mere Sound, and that the same

Sounds may produce very different kinds of Emotion, according to the qualities with which we associate them.

The Sound of Thunder is, perhaps of all others in Nature, the most Sublime. In the generality of mankind, this Sublimity is founded on Awe, and some degree of Terror; yet how different is the Emotion which it gives to the peasant who sees at last, after a long drought, the consent of Heaven to his prayers for rain,—to the philosopher, who, from the height of the Alps, hears it roll beneath his feet,—to the soldier, who, under the impression of ancient superstition, welcomes it, upon the moment of engagement, as the omen of victory! In all these cases, the Sound itself is the same: but how different the nature of the Sublimity it produces! The report of artillery is Sublime, from the images both of Power and of Danger we associate with it. The noise of an engagement heard from a distance is dreadfully Sublime. The firing of

a Review is scarcely more than magnificent. The sound of a real skirmish between a few hundred men, would be more sublime than all the noise of a feigned engagement between a hundred thousand men. The straggling fire of a company of soldiers upon a field-day, is contemptible, and always excites laughter. The straggling fire of the same number of men, in a riot, would be extremely sublime, and perhaps more terrible than an uniform report.

The howling of a Tempest is powerfully Sublime from many associations; yet how different to the inhabitant of the land, and the sailor, who is far from refuge,—to the inhabitant of the sheltered plain, and the traveller bewildered in the mountains,—to the poor man who has nothing to lose, and the wealthy, whose fortunes are at the mercy of the storm! In all these cases, the Sound itself is the same, but the nature of the Sublimity it produces is altogether different, and corresponds, not to the effect

upon the organ of Hearing, but to the character or situations of the men by whom it is heard, and the different qualities of which it is expressive to them.

The Sound of a Cascade is almost always Sublime; yet no man ever felt in it the same species of Sublimity, in a fruitful Plain, and in a wild and romantic country,—in the Pride of Summer, and in the Desolation of Winter,—in the hours of Gaiety, or Tranquillity, or Elevation,—and in seasons of Melancholy, or Anxiety, or Despair. The Sound of a Trumpet is often Sublime; but how different the Sublimity in the day of Battle,—in the March of an Army in Peace,—or amid the splendours of a Procession. There are few simple sounds more sublime than the report of a Cannon; yet every one must have felt the different Emotions of Sublimity with which the same sound affects him, and at the same intervals, in moments of public Sorrow, or public Rejoicing.

In these, and many other instances that might be mentioned, the nature of the Emotion we experience, corresponds, not to the nature of the Sound itself, but to the nature of the Association we connect with it; and is in fact altogether the same with the Emotion which the same quality produces, when unaccompanied with Sound. If Sounds in themselves were fitted by the constitution of our nature to produce these Emotions, it would seem that greater uniformity would be found in their effects; that the difference of their effects would be proportioned to the difference of their nature as Sounds; and that the same Sounds would permanently produce the same Emotion.

2. If any particular Sounds are fitted by our constitution to produce the Emotion of Sublimity, it seems impossible that sounds of a contrary kind should produce the same Emotion. If, on the contrary, the Sublimity of Sounds arises from the qualities we associate with them, it may reasonably be

expected, that sounds of all kinds will produce this Emotion, when they are expressive of such qualities as are in themselves Sublime. Many very familiar observations seem to illustrate this point.

The most general character, perhaps, of Sublimity in Sounds, is that of Loudness, and there are doubtless many instances where such sounds are very constantly sublime; yet there are many instances also, where the contrary quality of sounds is also sublime; and when this happens, it will universally be found, that such sounds are associated with Ideas of Power or Danger, or some other quality capable of exciting strong Emotion. The loud and tumultuous sound of a Storm is undoubtedly Sublime; but there is a low and feeble sound which frequently precedes it, more sublime in reality than all the uproar of the storm itself, and which has accordingly been frequently made use of by Poets, in heightening their descriptions of such scenes.

Along the woods, along the moorish fens
Sighs the sad Genius of the coming storm,
And up among the loose disjointed cliffs
And fractur'd mountains wild, the brawling brook
And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,
Resounding long in Fancy's listening ear.
Then comes the Father of the Tempest forth, &c.

Thomson's Winter.

" Did you never observe (says Mr Gray, in " a letter to a friend) *while rocking winds* " *are piping loud*, that pause, as the gust " is recollecting itself, and rising upon the " ear in a shrill and plaintive note, like the " swell of an Æolian Harp. I do assure " you there is nothing in the world so like " the voice of a spirit." Such a sound in itself is inconsiderable, and resembles many others which are very far from being Sublime; but as the forerunner of the storm, and the sign of all the imagery we connect with it, it is sublime in a very great degree. There is, in the same manner, said to be a low rumbling noise preceding an earthquake, in itself very inconsiderable, and ge-

nerally likened to some very contemptible sounds; yet in such a situation, and with all the images of danger and horror to which it leads, I question whether there is another sound so dreadfully Sublime. The soft and placid tone of the human voice is surely not sublime; yet in the following passage, which of the great images that precede it is so powerfully so? It is a passage from the first book of Kings, in which the Deity is described as appearing to the Prophet Elijah. "And he said, Go forth, "and stand upon the mount before the "Lord. And behold, the Lord passed by, "and a great and strong wind rent the "mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks "before the Lord; but the Lord was not "in the wind: and after the wind an "earthquake; but the Lord was not in "the earthquake: and after the earthquake "a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: "and after the fire *a still small voice.* And

"it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he "wrapped his face in his mantle."——

Another great division of Sounds is into Grave and Acute. If either of these classes of sound is sublime in itself, it should follow, according to the general laws of Sensation, that the other should not be so. In fact, however, the sublime is found in both, and perhaps it may be difficult to say to which of them it most permanently belongs. Instances of this kind are within the reach of every person's observation.

In the same manner, it may be observed, that the most common, and, in general, the most insignificant Sounds become Sublime, whenever they are associated with images belonging to Power, or Danger, or Melancholy, or any other strong Emotion, although in other cases they affect us with no Emotion whatever. There is scarcely in nature a more trifling Sound than the buzz of Flies, yet I believe there is no man of common Taste, who, in the deep silence of

a summer's noon, has not found something strikingly sublime in this inconsiderable sound. The falling of a drop of water, produces in general a very insignificant and unexpressive sound; yet sometimes in vaults, and in large cathedrals, a single drop is heard to fall at intervals, from the roof, than which, I know not if there is a single sound more strikingly Sublime. One can scarcely mention a sound less productive of the Sublime, than the sound of a hammer. How powerfully, however, in the following description, has Shakespeare made this vulgar sound Sublime!

From camp to camp, thro' the foul womb of night,
The hum of either army stilly sounds,
That the fix'd sentinels almost receive
The secret whispers of each other's watch.
Fire answers fire, and thro' their paly flames
Each battle sees the other's umber'd face;
Steed answers steed in high and boastful neighings,
Piercing the earth's dull ear, and from the tents
The armourers accomplishing the knights

With busy hammers, closing rivets up,
Give dreadful note of preparation.

Henry V. *act* iii. *Chorus.*

The sound of oars in water is surely very far from being Sublime, yet in a Tragedy of Thomson's, this sound is made strikingly Sublime, when (in the person of a man who had been left by the treachery of his companions upon a desert island), he describes the horrors he felt, when he first found his being deserted: And adds,

I never heard
A sound so dismal as their parting oars.——

Instances of the same kind are so numerous, that it is unnecessary to insist upon them. If Sounds are Sublime in themselves, independently of all Association, it seems difficult to account for contrary sounds producing the same effect, and for the same sounds producing different effects,

according to the Associations with which they are connected.

3. When such Associations are dissolved, the sounds themselves cease to be Sublime. There are many cases, undoubtedly, in which this experiment cannot be made, because in many cases the connection between such Sounds, and the qualities they indicate, is constant and invariable. The connection between the sound of Thunder, of a Whirlwind, of a Torrent, of an Earthquake, and the qualities of Power, or Danger, or Awfulness, which they signify, and which the objects themselves permanently involve, is established not by Man, but by Nature. It has no dependence upon his Will, and cannot be affected by any discipline of his Imagination. It is no wonder, therefore, while such connections are so permanent, that the Sublimity which belongs to the qualities of the objects themselves, should be attributed to their external signs, and that such signs should be

considered in themselves as fitted to produce this Emotion. The only case in which these associations are positively dissolved, is when, by some error of judgment, we either mistake some different sound for the Sound of any of these objects, or are imposed upon by some imitation of these Sounds. In such cases, I think it will not be denied, that when we discover our mistake, the Sounds are no longer Sublime.

There is nothing more common than for people who are afraid of Thunder, to mistake some very common and indifferent sound for it; as the rumbling of a Cart, or the rattling of a Carriage. While their mistake continues, they feel the Sound as sublime: the moment they are undeceived, they are the first to laugh at their error, and to ridicule the Sound which occasioned it. Children at first are as much alarmed at the Thunder of the Stage, as at real Thunder. Whenever they find that it is only a deception, they amuse themselves with mimick-

ing it. It may be observed also, that very young children show no symptoms of Fear or Admiration at Thunder, unless perhaps when it is painfully loud, or when they see other people alarmed about them; obviously from their not having yet associated with it the Idea of Danger: and perhaps also from this cause, that our imagination assists the report, and makes it appear much louder than it really is; a circumstance which seems to be confirmed by the common mistake we make of very inconsiderable noises for it. Mistakes in the same manner are often made in those countries where earthquakes are common, between very inconsiderable sounds, and that low rumbling sound which is said to precede such an event. There cannot be a doubt, that the moment the mistake is discovered, the noise ceases to be sublime. In all other cases of the same kind, where mistakes of this nature happen, or where we are deceived by imitation, I believe it is agreeable to every

person's experience, that while the mistake continues, the sounds affect us as sublime; but that as soon as we are undeceived, and that the sign is found not to be accompanied with the qualities usually signified, it ceases immediately to affect us with any Emotion. If any sounds were in themselves Sublime, or fitted by the constitution of our nature to produce this Emotion, independently of all Association, it would seem that there could be no change of our Emotion, and that these sounds would as permanently produce their correspondent Emotion, as the objects of every other Sense produce their correspondent ideas.

In all cases, however, where these associations are either accidental or temporary, and not, as in the former case, permanent in their nature, it will be found that sounds are sublime only, when they are expressive of qualities capable of producing some powerful Emotion, and that in all other cases, the same sounds are simply indiffe-

rent. In some of the instances formerly mentioned, where common or vulgar sounds are rendered sublime by association, it is obvious, that the same sounds in general, when they have no such expression to us, are very different from Sublimity. The buzz of flies, the dropping of water, the sound of a hammer, the dashing of an oar, and many others which might easily be mentioned, are in general Sounds absolutely indifferent, and so far from possessing any Sublimity in themselves, that it might be difficult at first to persuade any man that they could be made so. Their Sublimity therefore can only be attributed to the qualities which they signify.

There are few sounds, in the same manner, much more sublime, than the striking of a great clock at midnight. In other situations, the very same sound is altogether different in its expression. In the morning it is cheerful,—at noon indifferent, or at least unnoticed,—in the evening plaintive,—at

night only sublime. In the tolling of a bell, the sound is uniformly the same; yet such a sound has very different expressions, from the peculiar purposes to which it is applied. The passing bell, and the funeral bell, alone are sublime. The whistling of the wind in an autumnal, or in a wintry night, is often felt as sublime, and has accordingly been frequently introduced into poetical descriptions of a similar character. The nicest ear, however, is unable to distinguish any difference betwixt this sound, in the seasons before mentioned, and in spring or summer, when, if it has any character at all, it has a character very different from Sublimity. The Trumpet is very generally employed in scenes of Magnificence or Solemnity. The sound of the trumpet in such situations is accordingly very sublime, and seems to us to be expressive of that solemnity or magnificence. This instrument, however, as every one knows, is very often degraded to very mean offices. In such cases, the

sound is altogether indifferent, if not contemptible. The Bagpipe has, to a Scotch Highlander, no inconsiderable degree of sublimity, from its being the martial instrument of the country, and of consequence associated with many spirited and many magnificent images. To the rest of the world, the sound of this instrument is at best but barely tolerable. They who are acquainted with the history of superstition, will recollect many instances where Sounds have become sublime from this Association, which to the rest of mankind were very insignificant, and which have become also insignificant both to Individuals and to Nations, when the superstitions upon which their expression was founded had ceased.

There are several other considerations, from which the principle I here endeavour to illustrate, might be confirmed,—the uniform connection between Sublime Sounds, and some quality capable of producing Emotion, and the impossibility of finding

an instance where Sound is Sublime, independently of all Association,—the great difference in the number of sounds that are sublime to the common people, and men of cultivated or poetical imagination,—and the difference which every man feels in the effect of such sounds in producing this Emotion, according to the particular state of his own mind, or according to the particular strength or weakness of his sensibility to the qualities which such sounds express. But I am unwilling to anticipate the reader in speculations which he can so easily prosecute for himself. If the illustrations I have already offered are just; if Sounds of all kinds are sublime, when they are expressive of any qualities capable of producing strong Emotions; and if no Sounds continue to be sublime, when they cease to be expressive of such qualities, it is, I think, reasonable to conclude, that the Sublimity of such Sounds is to be ascribed, not to the

mere quality of Sound, but to those associated qualities of which it is significant.

II.

There is a great variety of sounds also, that occur in the scenes of Nature, which are productive of the Emotion of BEAUTY; the sound of a Waterfall, the Murmuring of a Rivulet, the Whispering of the Wind, the Sheepfold Bell, the sound of the Curfew, &c.

That such sounds are associated in our minds, with various qualities capable of producing Emotion, I think every man may be satisfied from his own experience. When such sounds occur, they are expressive to us of some particular character: they suit one species of Emotion, and not others; and if this were not obvious in itself, it might be made sufficiently obvious, from the use of such sounds in poetical Composition. Every man there, judges of the propriety of their introduction, and de-

termines with regard to the taste and judgment of the Poet, by their suitableness to the nature of the Emotion he has it in his view to excite. Every man, therefore, has some peculiar Emotion associated with such sounds, or some quality, of which they are considered as the signs or expressions.

That the Beauty of such sounds arises from the qualities of which they are expressive, and not from any original fitness in them to produce this Emotion, may perhaps be evident from the following considerations:

1. To those who have no such associations, or who consider them simply as Sounds, they have no beauty. It is long before children shew any degree of sensibility to the beauty of such sounds. To the greater number of them, in the same manner, the common people are altogether indifferent. To the peasant, the Curfew is only the mark of the hour of the evening,—the Sheep-bell, the sign of the neighbour-

hood of the flock,—the sound of a Cascade, the sign of the falling of water, &c. Give them the associations which men of cultivated imagination have with such sounds, and they will infallibly feel their beauty.

In the same manner, men of the best natural taste, who have not formed such associations, are equally insensible to the Beauty of such Sounds. The inhabitant of a country where there are no waterfalls is stunned at first with the noise of a Cascade, but is not delighted with it. They who are not accustomed to the Curfew, and who are ignorant of its being the evening bell, and, as such, associated with all those images of tranquillity and peace, which render that season of the day so charming, feel nothing more from its sound, than from the sound of a bell at any other hour of the day. The sound of the Sheepfold bell is but an insignificant noise to those who have never lived in a pastoral country, and who do not consider it as expressive of

those images of simple and romantic pleasure, which are so naturally connected with such scenes. Every man acquainted with the poetry of distant nations, knows, in the same manner, how much the beauty of many allusions to peculiar sounds of these countries is lost to those who are strangers to them, and who, of consequence, have none of those associations which render them so expressive to the natives.

2. It is further observable, that such Sounds are beautiful only in particular tempers of mind, or when we are under the influence of such Emotions as accord with the expressions which they possess. If, on the contrary, such Sounds were beautiful in themselves, although in different states of mind, we might afford them different degrees of attention; yet in all situations they would be beautiful, in the same manner as in every state of mind the objects of all other senses uniformly produce their correspondent ideas. The sound of the Curfew,

for instance, so beautiful in moments of melancholy or tranquillity, in a joyful or even in a cheerful hour, would be directly the reverse. The sound of a Waterfall, so valued amid the luxuriant scenery of summer, is scarcely observed, or if observed, simply disagreeable amid the rigours of winter. The sound of the hunting Horn, so extremely picturesque in seasons of gaiety, would be insupportable in hours of melancholy.

It is at particular seasons only, in truth, that we are sensible to the beauty of any of the Sounds before mentioned. For once that they affect us, they occur to us ten times without effect. The real and the most important business of life could not be carried on, if we were to indulge at all times our Sensibility either to Sublimity or Beauty. It is only at those seasons, that such Sounds affect us with any Emotions of Beauty, when we happen to be in that temper of mind, which suits with the qualities of which they are expressive. In our common hours,

when we are either thoughtless or busy, we suffer them to pass without notice. If such sounds were beautiful in themselves, such variations in their effects could not possibly happen.

3. When such associations are dissolved, the sounds themselves cease to be beautiful. If a man of the most common taste were carried into any striking scene of an ornamented garden, and placed within the hearing of a Cascade, and were told, in the midst of his enthusiasm, that what he takes for a Cascade is only a Deception, the sound continues the same, but the beauty of it would be irrecoverably gone. The tinkling of the Sheepfold bell may be imitated by many very common sounds; but who is there who could for a moment listen to any imitation of this romantic Sound? There are a great number of sounds which exactly resemble the sound of the hunting Horn, and which are frequently heard also in the same scenes: when known, however,

some of them are ridiculous, none beautiful. The same bell which is so strikingly beautiful in the evening, is altogether unnoticed at noon. "The flute of a Shepherd (says "Dr Beattie, with his usual beauty of ex- "pression) heard at a distance, in a fine "summer's day, amidst a romantic scene "of groves, hills, and waters, will give rap- "ture to the ear of the wanderer; though "the tune, the instrument, and the musi- "cian be such as he could not endure in "any other place." Instances of a similar kind are so numerous, that I forbear to detail them. Upon the supposition of any original and independent beauty in Sounds, such variations are altogether unaccountable.

I shall only farther observe upon this subject, that when it is considered, how few Sounds are beautiful amid the infinite number which occur in the scenes of Nature, and that wherever they do occur, there is always some pleasing or interesting quality

of which they are expressive, there arises a very strong presumption, independently of all other considerations, that the Beauty of such particular Sounds is derived from the qualities which they express, and not the effect of the mere sounds themselves.

PART II.

Of the Notes of Animals.

THERE are instances, I believe, both of Sublimity and Beauty in the Notes of Animals. That such Sounds are associated with the qualities of the Animals to which they belong, and become expressive of these qualities, cannot, I think, be denied. There are besides other associations we have with them, from their Manner of Life, the Scenes which they usually inhabit, and the Countries from which they come.

I.

That the Notes or Cries of some animals are SUBLIME, every one knows: the Roar of the Lion, the Growling of Bears, the Howling of Wolves, the Scream of the Eagle, &c. In all those cases, these are the notes of animals remarkable for their strength, and formidable for their ferocity, It would seem very natural, therefore, that the Sublimity of such Sounds should arise from the qualities of which they are expressive; and which are of a nature fitted to excite very powerful Emotions in our minds.

That this is in reality the case, and that it is not the Sounds themselves which have this effect, appears to be obvious from the two following considerations:

1. When we have no associations of this kind, such sounds are productive of no such Emotion. There is not one of these Sounds which may not be imitated in some manner or other; and which, while we are igno-

rant of the deception, does not produce the same Emotion with the real Sound: when we are undeceived, however, we are conscious of no other Emotion, but that perhaps of simple pain from its loudness. The howl of the Wolf is little distinguished from the howl of the Dog, either in its tone or in its strength, but there is no comparison between their Sublimity. There are few, if any of these Sounds so loud as the most common of all Sounds, the lowing of a Cow; yet this is the very reverse of Sublimity. Imagine this Sound, on the contrary, expressive of Fierceness or Strength, and there can be no doubt that it would become Sublime. The hooting of the Owl at midnight, or amid ruins, is strikingly Sublime. The same Sound at noon, or during the day, is trifling or ludicrous. The scream of the Eagle is simply disagreeable, when the bird is either tamed or confined; it is Sublime, only, when it is heard amid Rocks and Deserts, and when it is expressive to us

of Liberty, and Independence, and savage Majesty. The neighing of a War-horse in the field of battle, or of a young and untamed Horse when at large among mountains, is powerfully Sublime. The same sound in a Cart-horse, or a Horse in the stable, is simply indifferent, if not disagreeable. No Sound is more absolutely mean, than the grunting of Swine. The same Sound in the wild Boar, an animal remarkable both for fierceness and strength, is Sublime. The memory of the reader will supply many other instances.

2. The Sublimity of such sounds corresponds not to their Nature, as sounds, but to the Nature of the Qualities they signify. Sounds of all kinds are Sublime, in proportion as they are expressive of Power, or Fierceness, or Strength, or any other quality capable of producing strong Emotions, in the animals which they distinguish. There are many instances, undoubtedly, where loud Cries are sublime,

but there are many also, where such Notes are very far from being so. The lowing of Cows, the braying of the Ass, the scream of the Peacock, and many other inoffensive birds, are only mean or disagreeable.

Low or feeble Sounds, in the same manner, are generally considered as the contrary of Sublime; yet there are also many instances where such Sounds are strongly Sublime, when they distinguish the notes of fierce, or dangerous, or powerful animals. There is not a Sound so generally contemptible as that which we distinguish by the name of Hissing, yet this is the Sound appropriated to Serpents, and the greater part of poisonous reptiles; and, as such, is extremely Sublime. The noise of the Rattlesnake (that most dangerous animal of all his tribe) is very little different from the noise of a child's play-thing, yet who will deny its Sublimity! The growl of the Tyger resembles the purring of a Cat: the one is Sublime, the other insignificant. Nothing

can be more trifling than the Sound produced by that little animal, which among the common people is called the Death-watch; yet many a bold heart hath felt its power. The inhabitants of modern Europe would smile, if they were asked, if there were any Sublimity in the Notes of Chickens, or Swallows, or Magpies; yet under the influence of ancient superstition, when such animals were considered as ominous, the bravest among the people have trembled at their Sound. The superstitions of other countries afford innumerable instances of the same kind.

If these illustrations are just, it should seem, that the Sublimity of the Notes of Animals is to be ascribed to the Associations we connect with them, and not to any original fitness in the mere Sounds themselves to produce this Emotion.

II.

That the Beauty of the Notes or Cries

of Animals arises from the same cause, or from the qualities of which they are expressive to us, may perhaps be obvious from considerations equally familiar.

It seems at least very difficult to account for the instances of such Sounds which are universally reckoned beautiful, if we consider the sounds themselves as the causes of this emotion. The number of notes is as various as the different species of animals, and amid these there are a thousand instances, where similar Sounds are by no means productive of similar effects; and where, although the difference to the Ear is extremely small, there is yet a great difference in their capacity of producing such Emotions. If, on the contrary, we consider the source of their beauty as consisting in the pleasing or affecting qualities with which such sounds are associated, we have an easy solution of the difficulty, and which will be found at the same time perfectly to agree with the facts.

It would lead to a very long, and very unnecessary inquiry, if I were to attempt to enumerate the various Notes of this kind that are beautiful, and the different associations we have with them. That with many such sounds we have in fact such associations, is a matter, I apprehend, so conformable to every man's experience, that it would be superfluous to attempt to prove it.

There is indeed one class of animals, of which the notes are in a singular degree objects of Beauty—I mean Birds; and for this we may assign very sufficient reasons. 1*st*, Such notes approach much nearer than any other, to the tones of the human voice, and are therefore much more strongly expressive to us of such qualities as we are affected by. 2*dly*, These animals are, much more than any other, the objects of our interest and regard; not only from our greater acquaintance with them, and from the minuteness and delicacy of their forms, which renders them in some measure the

objects of Tenderness; but chiefly from their modes of life, and from the little domestic arrangements and attachments which we observe among them so much more strongly than among any other animals, and which indicate more affecting and endearing qualities in the animals themselves, than in any others we know. That we have such associations with Birds, is very obvious, from the use which is made of their instincts and manner of life, in the poetical compositions of all nations.

That it is from such associations the beauty of the notes of animals arises, may appear from the following considerations:

1. They who have no such associations, feel no Emotion of Beauty from them. A peasant would laugh, if he were asked, if the call of a Goat, or the bleat of a Sheep, or the lowing of a Cow were beautiful; yet in certain situations, all of these are undoubtedly so. A child shows no symptom of admiration at those Sounds which are most af-

fecting in natural scenery to other people. Every one will recollect, in what total indifference his early years were passed, to that multitude of beautiful Sounds which occur in the country; and I believe, if we attend to it sufficiently, it will be found, that the period when we became sensible to their beauty, was when we first began to feel them as expressive, either from our own observation of Nature, or from the perusal of books of poetry. In the same manner, they who travel into very distant countries, are at first insensible to the beauty which the natives of these countries ascribe to the notes of the animals belonging to them, obviously from their not having yet acquired the associations which are the foundation of their beauty. The notes which are sacred from any kind of superstition, are beautiful only to those who are under the dominion of that superstition. A foreigner does not distinguish any beauty in the note of the Stork. To the Hollander, however, to whom

that bird is the object of a very popular and very pleasing superstition, this note is singularly beautiful.

2. Such Sounds, as are either from experience, or from imagination, associated with certain qualities capable of producing Emotion, are beautiful only when they are perceived in those tempers of mind which are favourable to these Emotions. Instances of this are very numerous. The bleating of a Lamb is beautiful in a fine day in spring: in the depth of winter it is very far from being so. The lowing of a Cow at a distance, amid the scenery of a pastoral landscape in summer, is extremely beautiful: in a farmyard it is absolutely disagreeable. The hum of the Beetle is beautiful in a fine summer evening, as appearing to suit the stillness and repose of that pleasing season: in the noon of day it is perfectly indifferent. The twitter of the Swallow is beautiful in the morning, and seems to be expressive of the cheerfulness of that time: at any other hour

it is quite insignificant. Even the song of the Nightingale, so wonderfully charming in the twilight, or at night, is altogether disregarded during the day; in so much so, that it has given rise to the common mistake, that this bird does not sing but at night. If such notes were beautiful in themselves, independently of all association, they would necessarily at all times be beautiful.

3. In this, as in other cases before mentioned, when such associations are destroyed, the Beauty of the Sounds ceases to be felt. The call of a Goat, for instance, among rocks, is strikingly beautiful, as expressing wildness and independence. In a farmyard, or in a common inclosure, it is very far from being so. The plaintive and interesting bleat of the Lamb ceases to be beautiful, whenever it ceases to be the sign of infancy, and the call for that tenderness which the infancy of all animals so naturally demands. There is a bird that imitates the

notes of all other birds with great accuracy. Such imitations, however, are not in the least beautiful in it. There are people, in the same manner, who imitate the song of birds with surprising dexterity. It is the imitation, however, in such a case, that alone pleases us, and not the notes themselves. It is possible (according to the curious experiments of Mr Barrington) to teach a bird of any species the notes of any other species. It may, however, I think, very justly be doubted, whether the acquired notes would be equally beautiful. The connection we observe between particular birds, and the peculiar scenes in Nature which they inhabit, and the different seasons at which they appear, and the great difference in their instincts and manner of life, render their notes expressive to us of very dissimilar characters; and we accordingly distinguish them by epithets expressive of this variety. The wildness of the Linnet, the tenderness of the Redbreast,

the pertness of the Sparrow, the cheerfulness of the Lark, the softness of the Bullfinch, the plaintiveness of the Nightingale, the melancholy of the Owl, are expressions in general use, and the Associations we thus connect with them, very obviously determine the character or expression of their Notes. By the artificial education above mentioned, all these Associations would be destroyed; and, as far as I am able to judge, all, or at least a great part of the Beauty we feel from their songs. It is in the same manner that we are generally unhappy, instead of being delighted with the song of a bird in the cage. It is somewhat like the smile of Grief, which is much more dreadful than tears, or like the playfulness of an infant amid scenes of Sorrow. It is difficult therefore to say, whether in this cruel practice there is a greater want of Taste or of Humanity; and there could be in fact no excuse for it, if there were not a kind of tenderness excited towards them, from the

reflection that they are altogether dependent upon our benevolence, and a very natural gratitude awakened, by the exertions they make for our pleasure.

I forbear to produce any farther illustrations on this subject. From those that have been produced, it seems to me that we have sufficient ground for concluding, that, of those Sounds which have been considered, the Sounds that occur in the scenes of Nature, and the Sounds produced by animals, the Sublimity or Beauty arises from the qualities of which they are considered as the Signs or Expressions, and not from any original fitness in the Sounds themselves to produce such Emotions.

I have only further to add, that, upon the principle of the absolute and independent Sublimity or Beauty of Sounds, it is very difficult to account for the different Sounds which have been mentioned as productive of these Emotions. There is certainly no resemblance as sounds, between the noise

of Thunder and the hissing of a Serpent,—between the growling of a Tyger and the explosion of Gunpowder,—between the scream of an Eagle, and the shouting of a multitude; yet all of these are Sublime. In the same manner, there is as little resemblance between the tinkling of the Sheep-fold bell, and the murmuring of the Breeze, —between the hum of the Beetle, and the song of the Lark,—between the twitter of the Swallow, and the sound of the Curfew; yet all of these are beautiful. Upon the principle which I endeavour to illustrate, they are all perfectly accountable.

PART III.

Of the Tones of the Human Voice.

THERE is a similar Sublimity or Beauty felt in particular Notes or Tones of the human Voice.

That such Sounds are associated in our

Imaginations, with the qualities of mind of which they are in general expressive, and that they naturally produce in us the conception of these qualities, is a fact so obvious, that there is no man who must not have observed it. There are some Philosophers who consider these as the natural signs of Passion or Affection, and who believe that it is not from Experience, but by means of an original Faculty, that we interpret them: and this opinion is supported by great authorities. Whether this is so, or not, in the present inquiry, is of no very great importance; since, although it should be denied that we understand such signs instinctively, it cannot be denied, that very early in infancy this Association is formed, and that our opinions and conduct are regulated by it.

That the Beauty or Sublimity of such Tones arises from the nature of the qualities they express, and not from the nature of the Sounds themselves, may per-

haps appear from the following observations.

1. Such sounds are beautiful or sublime, only as they express Passions or Affections which excite our sympathy. There are a great variety of tones in the human voice, yet all these tones are not beautiful. If we inquire what are the particular Tones which are so, it will universally be found, that they are such as are expressive of pleasing or interesting affections. The tones peculiar to Anger, Peevishness, Malice, Envy, Misanthropy, Deceit, &c. are neither agreeable nor beautiful. The tone of Good Nature, though very agreeable, is not beautiful but at particular seasons, because the quality itself is in general rather the source of complacence than pleasure; we regret the want of it, but we do not much enjoy its presence. —On the contrary, the tones peculiar to Hope, Joy, Humility, Gentleness, Modesty, Melancholy, &c. though all extremely different, are all beautiful; because the qualities

they express are all the objects of Interest and Approbation. In the same manner, the tones peculiar to Magnanimity, Fortitude, Self-denial, Patience, Resignation, &c. are all sublime; and for a similar reason. This coincidence of the Beauty and Sublimity of the Tones of the human Voice, with those qualities of mind that are interesting or affecting to us, if it is not a formal proof, is yet a strong presumption that it is from the expression of such qualities that these sounds derive their Sublimity or Beauty.

2. The effect of such sounds in producing these Emotions, instead of being permanent, is limited by the particular temper of mind we happen to be in, or by the coincidence between that temper, and the peculiar qualities of which such sounds are expressive. To most men, for instance, the tone of Hope is beautiful. To a man in Despair, I presume it would be far from being so. To a man in Grief, the tone of Cheerfulness is simply painful. The tone of

Indignation, though in particular situations strongly sublime, to a man of a quiet and placid temper is unpleasant. To men of an ardent and sanguine character, the tone of Patience is contemptible. To peevish and irritable spirits, the voice of Humility, so peculiarly beautiful, is provoking. Such observations may be extended to many diversities of passion: and it may still farther be remarked, that those Sounds in the human Voice, which are most beautiful or most sublime to us, are always those that are expressive of the qualities of mind, which, from our particular constitutions or habits, we are most disposed to be affected by. If the Beauty or Sublimity of such tones were independent of the qualities of mind we thus associate with them, such diversities could not happen, and the same Sounds would produce uniformly the same Emotions, as the same Colours or Smells produce uniformly the same Sensations.

3. Similar Tones, in this case, do not

produce similar Emotions, as should seem to happen if these effects were produced by the mere Sounds themselves. There is little affinity, for instance, between the low and depressed tone of Grief, and the shrill and piercing note of Joy; yet both are beautiful. There is little resemblance between the loud sound of Rage, and the low placid tone of Patience; yet both are, in many cases, sublime. The tone of Peevishness is not very different from the tone of Melancholy; yet the one is beautiful, the other positively disagreeable. The tone of Pusillanimity is little distinguishable from the tone of Patience; but how different in the effects they produce upon our minds!—Observations of this kind, it is in the power of every one to extend.

4. Whenever these tones are counterfeited, or whenever they cease to be the Signs of those qualities of mind of which we have generally found them significant, they im-

mediately cease either to be sublime or beautiful. Every one must have observed, that this is the effect of Mimickry. Whereever, in the same manner, any species of deceit is used: or where we know that these tones are employed, without the existence of the correspondent passions, we no longer feel them as beautiful or sublime. If the Sounds themselves were the causes of these emotions, whatever we might think of the person, the Sounds themselves would continue to produce the Emotions either of Sublimity or Beauty, in the same manner as the most absurd misapplication of Colours, never disturbs our perception of them as colours.

5. There is yet a further consideration, which may perhaps more clearly illustrate this opinion, *viz.* That the Beauty or Sublimity of such Sounds in the human Voice, altogether depends on our opinion of the propriety or impropriety of the affections which they express. We know either from Nature, or from Experience, that particular

Sounds or Tones are the expression of particular Passions and Affections; and the perception of such sounds is immediately accompanied with the belief of such affections in the person from whom they proceed. But it is only from actual observation or inquiry, that we can know what is the cause of these affections. Our sympathy, our interest, it is plain, depends on the nature of this connection, on our opinion of the propriety or impropriety of such affections in such circumstances. All this, however, does not in any degree affect the nature of the Sound, which is still the same, whether the affection be proper or improper. It is very obvious, however, that our sense of the Beauty or Sublimity of such Sounds, depends on our opinion of this Propriety. No tone of Passion or Affection is beautiful, with which we do not sympathize. The tone of Joy, for instance, is beautiful, in most cases where it is heard. Suppose we find, that such a Sound proceeds from some

very trifling or ridiculous cause, our sense of its Beauty is instantly destroyed with our opinion of its Propriety. The tone of Melancholy, or moderated Grief, is affecting and beautiful beyond most others. Assign some frivolous reason for it, and instantly it becomes contemptible. The tone of Patience is sublime in a great degree. Tell us that it is Pusillanimity, and its effect is instantly gone. The high imperious note of Rage is often sublime. A trifling cause renders it simply painful. The same observation may be extended to the tones of all our passions. It is, I conceive, extremely difficult, if not impossible, to account for this change of Emotion, on the principle of the original and independent Beauty of such Sounds.

With regard to the Human Voice, however, it is to be observed, that besides all this, there is also a Beauty in particular degrees of the same Tones. Although the expression of the different passions is the same

in all men, yet it necessarily happens, that there is a sensible difference in the degree or character of these similar Sounds. There is no man of any delicacy of organs, who must not often have been sensible of such differences. These also are expressive to us of several qualities. They are, in the *first* place, expressive of the perfection or imperfection of the organs of speech, and of the health or indisposition of the person; circumstances which often determine in a great degree, when either of these expressions are strong, the pleasure or pain we have in their conversation. *2dly*, They are expressive also of the temper or character of mind. As we are naturally led to judge of the character of the person, from the peculiar tones of his voice, and to believe that such passions have the principal dominion of his mind, which have the most prevalent expression in his Voice, so we are led in the same way to judge of the degree or force of these passions, by the degree or strength of such

tones in his voice. This kind of inference is so natural, that there is perhaps no person who has not made it. That the Beauty of such chastened degrees of Sound arises from such associations is apparent; as it is expressive to us of moderation and self-command,—as it expresses habit, more than immediate impulse,—as it is peculiar to such tones only as are expressive of affecting passions or dispositions of mind,—as it is felt alone by those who are affected by such dispositions,—and as it is beautiful only in those cases where this temperance of Emotion, of which it is the sign, is considered as proper. I forbear therefore any further illustration of it.

The observations which I have offered on the subject of Simple Sounds, are perhaps sufficient to show, that the Sublimity and Beauty of these Sounds arises, in all cases,

from the Qualities with which we have observed them connected, and of which they appear to us as the Signs or Expressions; and that no Sounds in themselves are fitted by the constitution of our nature to produce these Emotions.

It is natural, however, to suppose, that in this, as in every other case, our experience should gradually lead to the formation of some general rules with regard to this expression; and that different sounds should appear to us to have a difference of character, according to the nature of the qualities with which we most frequently find them conjoined. This supposition will appear more probable, when we consider, not only that the diversities of sounds are few, and consequently that rules of this kind can be more easily formed; but still more, that these diversities of sounds are the immediate expressions of different qualities of Mind in the human Voice, and consequently, that their character becomes more certain and definite.

I believe, in fact, that something of this kind takes place early in life, and that, long before we are able to attend to their formation, we have formed certain general associations, with all the great diversities of sound, and that, in after life, they continue to be generally expressive of these characters.

To enumerate these general expressions, is a very delicate, as well as a very difficult task. I hazard, therefore, the following observations, only as hints for the prosecution of the subject; and as I am sensible of their imperfection, I am willing to rest no conclusion upon them.

The great divisions of Sound are into Loud and Low, Grave and Acute, Long and Short, Increasing and Diminishing. The two first divisions are expressive in themselves: the two last only in conjunction with others.

1. Loud Sound is connected with ideas of Power and Danger. Many objects in

nature which have such qualities, are distinguished by such sounds, and this association is farther confirmed from the human Voice, in which all violent and impetuous passions are expressed in loud tones.

2. Low Sound has a contrary expression, and is connected with ideas of Weakness, Gentleness, and Delicacy. This association takes its rise not only from the observation of inanimate nature, or of animals, where, in a great number of cases, such sounds distinguish objects with such qualities, but particularly from the human Voice, where all gentle, or delicate, or sorrowful affections, are expressed by such tones.

3. Grave Sound is connected with ideas of Moderation, Dignity, Solemnity, &c. principally, I believe, from all moderate, or restrained, or chastened affections being distinguished by such tones in the human Voice.

4. Acute Sound is expressive of Pain, or

Fear, or Surprise, &c. and generally operates by producing some degree of astonishment. This association, also, seems principally to arise from our experience of such connections in the human Voice.

5. Long or lengthened Sound seems to me to have no expression in itself, but only to signify the continuance of that quality which is signified by other qualities of Sound. A loud, or a low, a grave, or an acute Sound prolonged, expresses to us no more than the continuance of the quality which is generally signified by such Sounds.

6. Short or abrupt Sound has a contrary expression, and signifies the sudden cessation of the quality thus expressed.

7. Increasing Sound signifies, in the same manner, the increase of the quality expressed; as,

8. Decreasing Sound signifies the gradual diminution of such qualities.

I shall leave to the reader to attend to

the diversity of expression which arises from the different combination of these diversities of Sound.

The most Sublime of these Sounds appears to me to be a loud, grave, lengthened and increasing Sound.

The least Sublime, a low, acute, abrupt, or decreasing Sound.

The most beautiful, a low, grave and decreasing Sound.

The least beautiful, a loud, acute, lengthened and increasing Sound.

Such are the few general principles that, as far as I can judge, take place, with regard to the Sublimity or Beauty of Sounds. The innumerable exceptions that there are to every one of these rules, afford a sufficient proof, that this Sublimity or Beauty does not arise from the Sounds themselves. Where, however, any new sound occurs, it is, I think, by its approach to one or other of these classes that we determine its Sublimity or Beauty.

SECTION II.

Of Composed Sounds, or Music.

I.

In the preceding illustrations, I have considered only Simple Sounds as producing the Emotions of Sublimity or Beauty.

Sounds, however, are capable of being united by certain laws, and of forming a whole. To such a composition of Sounds we give the name of Music; an Art, confessedly, of great power, in producing Emotions both of Sublimity and Beauty, and the source of one of the first and purest pleasures of which our nature is susceptible.

Upon this subject, I shall beg leave to offer a few observations, although it is with great diffidence that I speak upon an art of which I have no theoretical knowledge,

and of which I can judge only from the effect that it produces on myself.

The essence of Music consists in continued Sound. The same sound, however, when continued, has no beauty, farther than as a simple sound, and when long continued, becomes positively disagreeable: Music therefore must necessarily consist in the composition of different sounds.

The Succession or Composition of all different Sounds is not equally pleasing. By a peculiar law of our nature, there are certain sounds of which the union is agreeable, and others of which the union is disagreeable. There is therefore a relation between sounds, established by nature, which cannot be violated without pain. Music, therefore, as an art intended to produce pleasure, must consist in the composition of related Sounds.

These observations are sufficiently obvious. There are, however, two other cir-

cumstances in the Succession of Sounds, necessary to constitute Music.

1. The mere Succession of related Sounds is not in itself pleasing. Although the Succession of any two related Sounds is agreeable, yet a whole series of such Sounds, in which no other relation was observed but the relation between individual Sounds, would be absolutely disagreeable. To render such a series pleasing, it is necessary that it should possess Unity, or that we should discern a relation not only between the individual Sounds, but also among the whole number of Sounds that constitute the series. Although every word in language is significant, and there is a necessary relation among words, established by the rules of grammar; yet it is obviously possible to arrange words according to grammatical rules, which yet shall possess no meaning. In the same manner, a series of Sounds may be composed, according to their individual relations, which yet may possess no general

relation, and from which, as we can discover no end, we can derive no pleasure. What Thought is to the arrangement of words, the Key, or the fundamental Tone, is to the arrangement of Sounds; and as the one constitutes a whole in language, by establishing a certain and definite idea, to which all the words in a sentence bear a relation, so the other constitutes a whole in Music, by establishing a definite and leading Sound, to which all the other Sounds in the series bear a similar relation. The first circumstance, therefore, that distinguishes musical Succession, is the preservation of this relation among all the individual Sounds to one key or fundamental tone, which is the foundation and end of the composition.

2. The second circumstance which distinguishes Musical Succession, is the Regularity or Uniformity of that Succession. In natural events, Succession without Regularity is confusion; and wherever Art or Design is supposed, is positively disagreeable.

In Music therefore, as an Art designed to please, Regularity or Uniformity is absolutely necessary. The most pleasing succession of Sounds, without the preservation of this Regularity, or what is commonly called Time, every one knows, is positively displeasing. For this purpose, every succession of Sounds is supposed to be divided into certain equal intervals, which, whether they comprehend more or fewer Notes, occupy the same space of Time in the succession of these Notes. To preserve this Uniformity, if there are few Sounds in this Interval, these Sounds must be prolonged to occupy the whole space of Time. If there are many, they must be sounded quickly for the same reason. The one constitutes what is called Slow, the other what is called Quick Time in common language. In both cases, however, the space or portion of time allotted to each Interval is uniformly the same, and constitutes the only Regularity of which Sounds in succession

are capable. A regular or uniform succession of Sounds, therefore, related to one Key or fundamental Note, may be considered as constituting Musical succession, and as distinguishing it from all other successions of Sound. The accurate perception both of this Regularity, and of this Relation, constitutes that Faculty which is generally called a good or a Musical Ear.

II.

If, therefore, we consider Music as such a succession of Sounds as I have now described, the two circumstances which distinguish or determine the nature or character of every Composition, are, the Nature of the Key, and the Nature of the Progress; the Nature of the Fundamental and governing Sound, and the Nature, or (as it is commonly called) the Time, of the Succession.

With both of these characteristics of Mu-

sical composition I apprehend that we have many Associations.

The Key or Fundamental Tone of every Composition, from its relation to the Tones of the human Voice, is naturally expressive to us of those qualities or affections of mind which are signified by such Sounds. It is perhaps unnecessary to offer any illustration of this, because it is so obvious to every man's observation. The relation of such Tones in Music to the expression of the qualities of mind is indeed so strong, that all Musicians understand what Keys or what Tones are fitted for the expression of those affections, which it is within the reach of Music to express. It is also observable, that they who are most unacquainted with Music, are yet able immediately to say, what is the affection which any particular Key is fitted to express. Whether any piece of Music is beautiful, or not, may be a subject of dispute, and very often is so; but whether the Sounds of which it is composed are gay or

solemn, cheerful or melancholy, elevating or depressing, there is seldom any dispute.

That the Time of musical Composition is also expressive to us of various affecting or interesting qualities, can scarcely be disputed. In all ages, quick time, or a rapid succession of Sounds, has been appropriated to the expression of Mirth and Gaiety; slow time, or a slow succession of Sounds, to the expression of Melancholy or Sadness. All the passions or affections, therefore, which partake of either of these ingredients, may be generally expressed by such circumstances in the Composition, and the different degrees of such Movements may, in the same manner, express such affections as partake of any intermediate nature between these extremes. In what manner the conception of such affections is associated with such circumstances in the progress of Sound, it is not my business to explain. It is sufficient that the fact itself is acknowledged. I cannot avoid, however, observ-

ing, that there is a very strong analogy, not only between the progress of Musical Sounds, and the progress of Sounds in the human Voice, in the case of particular passions; but that there is also a similar analogy between such progress in Sounds, and the progress of Thought in the case of such Passions. Under the influence of pleasing or agreeable passions, the articulation is quick; in the case of contrary passions it is slow; and so strong is this expression, that we are disposed to judge of the passion any person is affected with, although we do not hear the words he utters, merely from the slowness or rapidity of his articulation. It is observable, in the same manner, that different passions have an influence upon the progress of our thoughts, and that they operate very sensibly either in accelerating or retarding this progress. All the passions which belong to Pleasure, are attended with a rapid succession of Thoughts, and seem to give an unusual

degree of vigour to our Imagination. The passions, on the contrary, which belong to Pain, produce, in general, a slow and languid succession of Thought, and seem to depress our Imagination below its usual Tone. This is so obvious, that every person must have observed it even in conversation.

The Progress of musical Sounds, therefore, may very naturally express to us the nature or character of particular passions, not only from the analogy between such progress of Sounds, and the progress of Thought; but still more from its being in a great measure the Sign of such affections of Mind, by making use of the same Sounds or Tones, and the same varieties in the progress of these Sounds, which are in real life the Signs of such affections in the human Voice. Whether these observations account for the associations we have with musical Time, or not, is at present a matter of no consequence, as the fact itself

is sufficiently certain. The appropriation of particular time, to particular Emotions, has taken place in every age and country, is understood by every man, and is not the less certain, though no account can be given of the reason of it.

It is in thus being able to express both the Tone of Passion or Affection, and that progress of Thought or Sentiment which belongs to such Affections, that, in as far as I am able to judge, the real Foundation of musical Expression consists. It is far beyond the bounds which I prescribe myself in these observations, to enter into any minute investigation of the different expressions which such Sounds, and such Compositions of Sounds in general possess. But if the reader will recollect, what are the distinct associations which it has formerly been observed we have with Sounds or Tones, as loud or soft, grave or acute, and the particular associations which it has now been observed we have with the different pro-

gressions of Sound, as quick, or moderate, or slow; and will further attend to the possible number of ways in which these different characteristics of Music may be combined, he will be fully sensible both of the different Emotions which it is in the power of Music to express, and of the great variety which it affords in the expression of these Emotions.

If I am not mistaken, the real extent of Musical expression coincides in a great degree with this account of it. These Signs in the human Voice are general Signs. They express particular classes of passion or emotion, but they do not express any particular passion. If we had no other means of intercourse or of information, we might from such Signs infer, that the person was elevated or depressed, gay or solemn, cheerful or plaintive, joyous or sad; but we could not, I think, infer, what was the particular passion which produced these expressions. Music, which can avail itself of these Signs only,

can express nothing more particular than the Signs themselves. It will be found, accordingly, that it is within this limit that musical Expression is really confined; that such classes of Emotion it can perfectly express; but that when it goes beyond this limit, it ceases to be either expressive or beautiful. The general Emotions of Gaiety, Elevation, Solemnity, Melancholy, or Sadness, it is every day found to express; and with regard to such general expressions there is never any mistake; but when it attempts to go further, when it attempts to express particular passions, Ambition, Fortitude, Pity, Love, Gratitude, &c. it either fails altogether in its effect, or is obliged to have recourse to the assistance of words to render it intelligible. "It is in general "true (says Dr Beattie) that Poetry is the "most immediate and the most accurate "interpreter of Music. Without this auxi-"liary, a piece of the best music, heard for "the first time, might be said to mean

" something, but we should not be able to " say what. It might incline the heart to " sensibility, but poetry or language would " be necessary to improve that sensibility " into a real Emotion, by fixing the fancy " upon some definite and affecting ideas. " A fine instrumental symphony, well per- " formed, is like an oration delivered with " propriety, but in an unknown tongue; it " may affect us a little, but conveys no de- " terminate feeling. We are alarmed, per- " haps, or melted, or soothed; but it is very " imperfectly, because we know not why. " The singer by taking up the same air, " and applying words to it, immediately " translates the oration into our own lan- " guage. Then all uncertainty vanishes, " the fancy is filled with determinate ideas, " and determinate Emotions take posses- " sion of the heart."—*Essay upon Poetry and Music, part* 1. *chap.* vi.

Nor is this confining the Expression of which Music is capable within narrower li-

mits than is consistent with our experience of its effects. Although its real power consists in its imitation of those Signs of Emotion or Passion which take place in the human Voice, yet from its nature it possesses advantages which these Signs have not, and which render it, within these limits, one of the most powerful means which can be made use of in exciting Emotion. As far as I am able to judge, these advantages principally consist in the two following circumstances:

1. In that variety of sounds which it admits of, in conformity to the key, or fundamental Tone. In the real Expression of Passion in the human Voice, the sound is nearly uniform, or at least admits of very small variation. In so far, therefore, as mere Sound is concerned, the tone of any passion would in a short time become unpleasing from its uniformity; and if this effect were not forgot, in our attention to the language and sentiments of the person

who addresses us, would be perceived by every ear. In Music, on the contrary, the variety of related Sounds which may be introduced, not only prevents this unpleasing effect of uniformity, and preserves the Emotion which the prevailing tone is of itself able to excite, but by varying the expression of it, keeps both our attention and our imagination continually awake. The one resembles what we should feel from the passion of any person, who uniformly made use of the same words to express to us what he felt. The other, what we feel from that eloquence of passion, where new images are continually presenting themselves to the mind of the speaker, and a new source of delight is afforded to our imagination, in the perception of the agreement of those images with the Emotions from which they arise. The effect of musical Composition, in this light, resembles, in some measure, the progress of an oration, in which our interest is continually kept alive; and if it

were possible for us, for a moment, to forget that the performer is only repeating a lesson, were it possible for us to imagine, that the sounds we hear were the immediate expressions of his own Emotion, the effect of Music might be conceived in some measure to approach to the effect of Eloquence. To those who have felt this influence, in the degree in which, in some seasons of sensibility, it may be felt, there is no improbability in the accounts of the effects of Music in early times, when the professions of Poetry and Music were not separated: when the Bard, under the influence of some strong and present impression, accommodated his melody to the language of his own passion; and when the hearers, under the influence of the same impression, were prepared to go along with him, in every variety of that Emotion which he felt and expressed himself.

2. But, besides this, there is another circumstance in which the Expression of Mu-

sic differs materially from the Expression of natural Signs, and which serves to add considerably to the strength of its effect. Such natural Sounds express to us immediately, if they express at all, the Emotion of the person from whom they proceed, and therefore immediately excite our own Emotion. As these Sounds, however, have little or no variety, and excite immediately their correspondent Emotion, it necessarily happens, that they become weaker as they proceed, until at last they become positively disagreeable. In musical Composition, on the contrary, as such Sounds constitute a whole, and have all a relation to the Key, or fundamental Note in which they close, they not only afford us a satisfaction as parts of a regular whole, but, what is of much more consequence, they keep our attention continually awake, and our expectation excited, until we arrive at that fundamental Tone, which is both the close of the Composition, and the end of our expectation. Instead,

therefore, (as in the former case) of our Emotion becoming more languid as the Sounds proceed, it becomes, in the case of musical Composition, on the contrary, more strong. The peculiar affection we feel is kept continually increasing, by means of the expectation which is excited for the perfection of this whole, and the one and the other are only gratified when we arrive at this desired and expected end.

In this respect, indeed, musical Expression is in itself superior even to the Expression of Language: and were the Passions or Affections which it can express, as definite or particular, as those which can be communicated by Words, it may well be doubted, whether there is any Composition of Words which could so powerfully affect us, as such a Composition of Sounds. In Language, every person under the influence of Passion or Emotion, naturally begins with expressing the cause of his Emotion; an observation which every one must have

made in real life, and which might easily be confirmed by instances from Dramatic Poetry. In this case, our Emotion is immediately at its height, and as it has no longer any assistance from curiosity, naturally cools as the Speaker goes on. In Music, on the contrary, the manner of this communication resembles the artful, but interesting conduct of the Epic or Dramatic Poem, where we find ourselves at once involved in the progress of some great Interest, where our curiosity is wound up to its utmost to discover the event, and where at every step this Interest increases, from bringing us nearer to the expected end. That the effect of musical Composition is similar; that while it excites Emotion from the nature of the Sounds, it excites also an increasing expectation and interest from the conduct of these Sounds, and from their continued dependence upon the close, has, I am persuaded, been felt in the strongest manner by every person of common sensi-

bility, and indeed is in itself extremely obvious, from the effect which is universally produced by any pathetic composition upon the audience. The increasing silence,—the impatience of interruption, which are so evident as the composition goes on,—the arts by which the performer is almost instinctively led to enhance the merit of the close, by seeming to depart from it,—the suppression of every sign of emotion till the whole is completed,—and the violence either of sensibility or applause, that are immediately displayed, whenever a full and harmonious close is produced; all testify in the strongest manner the increasing nature of the Emotion, and the singular advantage which Music thus possesses, in keeping the attention and the sensibility so powerfully awake.

Such seems to me the natural effect of Music on the human Mind: in expressing to us those Affections or Emotions, which are signified by the tones of the Voice, and

the progress of articulate Sounds; limited indeed in the reach of its imitation or expression, and far inferior to language, in being confined to the expression only of general Emotions; but powerful within those limits, beyond any other means we know, both by the variety which it can afford, and the continued and increasing interest which it can raise.

It is obvious, that the observations which I have now offered, relate principally to vocal Music, and to that simple species of Composition which is commonly called Song or Air. I believe it will be found that this is in reality, not only the most expressive species of Composition, but the only one which affects the minds of uninstructed Men. It is the only Music of early Ages, the only Music of the common People, the only Music which pleases us in infancy and early Youth. It is a considerable time before we discern the beauties of more artificial Composition, or indeed before we un-

derstand it. In such kinds of composition a young person, whatever may be his natural taste, seldom discovers any continued relation. He is disposed to divide it in his own mind into different parts; to consider it as a collection of distinct airs; and he is apt to judge of it, not as a whole, but as the separate parts of it are expressive to him or not. There is nothing accordingly more common, than to find young people expressing their admiration of a particular strain or division of the Composition, and such strains are always the most simple, and those which approach most to the nature of Airs; but it is seldom, I believe, that they are able to follow the whole of a Concerto, or that they are found to express their admiration of it as a whole.

With such a species of Composition, however, they who are instructed in Music have many and very interesting associations. A Song or an Air leads us always to think of the Sentiment, and seldom dis-

poses us to think of any thing else. An Overture or a Concerto disposes us to think of the Composer. It is a work in which much invention, much judgment, and much taste may be displayed; and it may have, therefore, to those who are capable of judging of it, all that pleasing effect upon the mind, which the composition of an excellent Poem or Oration has upon the minds of those who are judges of such works. The qualities of Skill, of Novelty, of Learning, of Invention, of Taste, may, in this manner, be expressed by such Compositions; qualities, it is obvious, which are the foundation both of Sublimity and Beauty in other cases, and which may undoubtedly be the foundation of such characters in musical Composition, even although it should have no other or more affecting expression to recommend it. Nor is this all: such compositions are not read in private, but are publicly recited. There is, therefore, the additional circumstance of the performance to be at-

tended to; a circumstance of no mean consequence, and of which every man will acknowledge the importance, who recollects the different effects the same composition has produced on him, when performed by different people. There is, therefore, the Judgment, the Taste, the expression of the Performer, in addition to all those different qualities of excellence which may distinguish the Composition; and the whole effect is similar to that which every one has felt from any celebrated piece of Poetry, when recited by an able and harmonious Declaimer. Even to the very worst music, this gives an effect, and the effect may easily be conceived when the Music also is good.

III.

While Music has this power in expressing some of the most interesting and affecting passions of the human Mind; and is, in its more artificial state, significant to us of

so many pleasing and delightful qualities, it will not, I hope, be considered as rash, if I presume to think that it is from these associations that it derives all its power in producing the Emotions of Sublimity or Beauty, and that wherever it does produce either of these effects, it is by being expressive to us either of some interesting passion, or of some valuable and pleasing quality in the Composition or the Performance.

When any musical Composition affects us with the Emotions either of Sublimity or Beauty, it should seem that this effect must arise from one or other of the following causes: 1*st*, From the nature of the single or individual Sounds which enter into the Composition. 2*dly*, From the nature of the Composition itself, or from those laws which, as has before been observed, are necessary to render a succession of Sounds agreeable, or to constitute Music; or, 3*dly*, From the associations we connect with it, or the qualities of which it is expressive to

us. That the Beauty or Sublimity of single sounds, is not a quality of the Sounds themselves, but arises from their expression, I have already endeavoured to illustrate. That the Beauty of musical Composition does not arise from the second of those causes, or from the circumstances of the Composition itself, and that it is altogether to be ascribed to the qualities of which it is expressive to us, I am disposed to conclude from the following considerations:

1. If the Beauty of Music arose from the regular composition of Sounds, according to those laws which are necessary to constitute Music or an agreeable succession of Sounds, it would necessarily follow, that every composition, where these laws were observed, would be beautiful. Every man however, knows, that there is a very wide distinction between Music, and beautiful Music.* If a Composition is expressive of no sentiment, a common hearer feels no Beauty from it: If it is quite common, and

has neither novelty nor skill in it, a Connoisseur in Music feels as little. If it has neither one nor other, all the world pronounce it bad Music. Yet such a Composition may be perfectly regular, may be in obedience to the strictest laws of Composition; and will give to every one that inferior pleasure, which arises from a regular succession of Sounds. As there is therefore a very evident distinction between that mechanical pleasure which we receive from mere Music, and that delight which we feel from Music when Beautiful or Sublime, it is obvious, that the mere regular Composition of related Sounds, is not the cause of the Emotions either of Sublimity or Beauty.

2. If the Beauty of Music arose from any of those qualities, either of Sound, or of the Composition of Sounds, which are immediately perceivable by the Ear, it is obvious that this would be expressed in Language, and that the terms by which such

Music was characterized, would be significant of some quality or qualities discernible by the Ear: If, on the contrary, this Beauty arises from the interesting or affecting qualities of which it is expressive to us, such qualities, in the same manner, ought, in common language, to be assigned as the causes of this Emotion: and tho terms by which such Music is characterized ought to be significant of such qualities. That the last is the case, I think there can be no dispute. The terms Plaintive, Tender, Cheerful, Gay, Elevating, Solemn, &c. are not only constantly applied to every kind of Music that is either Sublime or Beautiful; but it is in fact by such terms only that men ever characterize the Compositions from which they receive such Emotions. If any man were asked what was it that rendered such an Air so beautiful; he would immediately answer, because it was Plaintive, Solemn, Cheerful, &c. but he never would think of describing its peculiar

nature as a Composition of Sounds. In the same manner, if he were accounting to any person for the Beauty or Sublimity of any Composition, if he were to describe it in the most accurate way possible, as having particular characters of Composition, he might indeed make him wonder at his learning, but he would leave him as ignorant as before, with regard to the source of its Beauty. Were he to tell him, on the other hand, that it was expressive of Melancholy, Gaiety, or Tenderness, he would make him understand at once the reason of his Emotion. If the Beauty or Sublimity of Music arose from the laws of its Composition, the very reverse of all this would obviously be the case.

It is observable, in the same manner, that even they who are best acquainted with the principles of Composition, and who are most disposed to forget the end, in attention to the rules of the science, yet never think of expressing the Beauty or Su-

blimity of any piece of Music, by terms significant of its nature as a Composition, but by such as are significant of some pleasing or interesting Association. If they forget the Expression of Music, they never forget the merits of the Composer. When they speak, therefore, of the Sublimity or Beauty of any such Composition, if they are farther questioned upon the subject, it will always be found, that it is either the Learning, the Invention, or the Taste which it displays, that they assign as the foundation of their admiration, or some other quality, either in the composition or performance, perfectly distinct from the mere qualities either of Sound or Composition. This universal language of mankind, is not only a proof of the connection between the Beauty and Sublimity of Music, and the Expressions which it conveys; but it is impossible that this language should ever have been either employed, or understood, if the

Sublimity or Beauty of Music were independent of such Expressions.

3. If the Beauty or Sublimity of Music depended solely upon the nature of its composition, and was independent of the qualities of which it is expressive, it would necessarily happen, that the same compositions must always be beautiful or sublime, which once were so; and that in every situation they must produce the same Emotion, in the same manner as every other object of Sense uniformly produces its correspondent sensation. The truth is, however, that no such thing takes place, and that, on the contrary, Music is then only beautiful or sublime, when it is accommodated to the Emotion which it is intended to express. If the Passion of Revenge, for instance, were expressed by the most beautiful composition of Sounds conceivable, which either naturally, or from habit, were considered as expressive of Tenderness, every man, instead of being affected with

its beauty, would laugh at its absurdity. In the same manner, if Love or Tenderness were expressed by any Sounds, or composition of Sounds, generally appropriated to the expression of Rage, or Revenge, however sublime they might be according to their own expression, they would undoubtedly cease to be so by such an appropriation. Instances of the same kind might easily be multiplied. If we could suppose, that, by a miracle, the present system of Sounds in the human Voice were altogether changed; that the Tones which now express Mirth, should then express Melancholy, the Sounds which now express Rage, should then express Tenderness, &c. and that a similar revolution should at the same time take place in the expression of the progress of Sounds, I think every man will allow, that the whole system of Music must of necessity be changed; that a new Music must arise, accommodated to this change in the system of expressive Sounds, and

that if it were not changed, instead of affording us any Emotions of Beauty or Sublimity, it would either be unintelligible, or absolutely absurd; yet in such a case, all that arises from the mere mechanical structure of Sounds would remain, all that is immediately perceived by the Ear, either in Sound itself, or in the composition of Sound, would have undergone no revolution. There cannot well be a stronger proof, that the Beauty or Sublimity of Music arises from the qualities which it expresses, and not from the means by which they are expressed.

4. It is observable, that the Beauty or Sublimity of Music is felt by those who have no perception of the relation of Sounds, either in point of Tune or Time, and who consequently must be unconscious of any pleasure that arises from the mere composition of Sounds. Every one who will take the trouble of inquiring, will find many people who have (as it is generally called)

no musical ear, who are unable to learn the simplest tune, and who can scarcely distinguish one tune from another, who are yet sensible to the Beauty or Sublimity of Music, and who feel delight from different kinds of Composition. The want of a Musical ear is not uncommon; but I believe there is no instance of any person who is insensible either to the Expression of different Tones in the human Voice, or who is not differently affected by the different progress of Sounds. In such cases, although Music has not the same extent of Expression to them, that it has to those who are born with a good ear, yet still it has some Expression; and the proof of it is, that although they cannot tell whether any note is just or not, or whether the time of any composition is perfectly preserved, they can still tell whether a song is gay or plaintive, whether fitted to inspire mirth or melancholy. They have therefore that degree of delight from it, which the scenes of Nature usually in-

spire, where a general but indistinct relation is observed to some interesting or affecting qualities, and where, in consequence of this relation, such scenes naturally tend to excite or to encourage a correspondent Emotion; but they are insensible to that greater delight, which, as has already been shown, every man of a good Ear feels, both from the variety of this Expression, and from the continued and increasing interest which it awakens. If the Sublimity or Beauty of Music arose from the discernment of such relations as constitute the laws of composition, it is obvious that they who are incapable of discerning such relations, would be incapable, at the same time, of discovering either its Sublimity or Beauty.

In the preceding observations, I have considered only the permanent Associations we have with musical Composition, or the Expressions which are everywhere felt both in the Tone and the Time of such successions of Sound, from their analogy to the character

and progress of Sound in the human Voice. With Music, however, we have often many accidental Associations, both individual and national; and the influence of such Associations upon our opinions of the Beauty or Sublimity of Music might be shown from many considerations. On the one hand, from the dependence of the Beauty of Music upon the temporary or habitual dispositions of our minds,—from the different effect which is produced by the same Composition, according to the Associations we happen to connect with it,—and from the tendency which all national Music has to render those who are accustomed to it insensible to the beauty of any foreign Music, from their association of particular sentiments with peculiar characters or modes of Composition: And, on the other hand, from the influence of individual or national Associations, in increasing the Sublimity or Beauty of Music, both by increasing its natural Expressions, and by rendering these

Expressions more definite and precise. I am unwilling, however, to swell these very imperfect remarks, by illustrations which every one can so easily prosecute for himself. From the whole, I am induced to conclude, that Music is productive to us of two distinct and separate Pleasures:

1. Of that mechanical Pleasure, which by the constitution of our nature accompanies the perception of a regular succession of related Sounds.

2. Of that Pleasure which such compositions of Sound may produce, either by the Expression of some pathetic or interesting Affection, or by being the sign of some pleasing or valuable Quality, either in the Composition or the Performance.

That it is to this last Source the Beauty or Sublimity of Music is to be ascribed, or that it is Beautiful or Sublime only when it is expressive of some pleasing or interesting Quality, I hope is evident from the preceding observations.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Objects of Sight.

THE greatest part of the external objects, in which we discover Sublimity or Beauty, are such as are perceived by the Sense of Sight. It has even been imagined by some Philosophers, that it is to such objects only that the name of Beauty is properly applied, and that it is only from analogy that the same term is applied to the objects of our other Senses. This opinion, however, seems at first sight ill-founded. The terms Beauty and Sublimity are applied by all men to Sounds, and even sometimes to smells. In our own experience, we very often find, that the same Emotion is produced by Sounds, which is produced by Forms or Colours; and the nature of language sufficiently shows, that

this is conformable also to general experience. There seems no reason therefore for limiting the objects of Sublimity or Beauty to the sole class of visible objects.

It must however be acknowledged, that by far the greatest number of these objects are such as we discover by means of this Sense; nor does it seem difficult to assign the reason of this superiority. By the rest of our senses, we discover only single qualities of objects; but by the Sense of Seeing, we discover all that assemblage of qualities which constitute, in our imaginations, the peculiar nature of such objects. By our other senses, we discover, in general, such qualities, only when the bodies are in contact with us; but the Sense of Sight affords us a very wide field of observation, and enables us to make them the objects of attention, when they are at very considerable distances from ourselves. It is natural, therefore, that the greater power of this Sense should dispose us to greater confi-

dence in it, and that the qualities of bodies which we discover by means of it, should more powerfully impress themselves upon our imagination and memory, than those single qualities which we discover by the means of our other Senses. The visible qualities of objects accordingly, become to us not only the distinguishing characteristics of external bodies, but they become also in a great measure the Signs of all their other qualities; and by recalling to our minds the qualities signified, affect us in some degree with the same Emotion which the objects themselves can excite. Not only the smell of the Rose, or the Violet, is expressed to us by their Colours and Forms; but the utility of a Machine, the elegance of a Design, the proportion of a column, the speed of the Horse, the ferocity of the Lion, even all the qualities of the human mind, are naturally expressed to us by certain visible appearances; because our experience has taught us, that such qualities are connected

with such appearances, and the presence of the one immediately suggests to us the idea of the other. Such visible qualities, therefore, are gradually considered as the Signs of other qualities, and are productive to us of the same Emotions with the qualities they signify.

But, besides this, it is also to be observed, that by this sense, we not only discover the nature of individual objects, and therefore naturally associate their qualities with their visible appearance; but that by it also we discover the relation of objects to each other; and that hence a great variety of objects in nature become expressive of qualities which do not immediately belong to themselves, but to the objects with which we have found them connected. Thus, for instance, it is by this sense we discover that the Eagle inhabits among Rocks and Mountains; that the Red-breast leaves the Woods in Winter, to seek shelter and food among the dwellings of men; that the song of the

Nightingale is peculiar to the Evening and the Night, &c. In consequence of this permanent connection, these animals acquire a character from the scenes they inhabit, or the seasons in which they appear, and are expressive to us in some measure of the character of these seasons and scenes. It is hence that so many objects become expressive, which perhaps in themselves would never have been so; that the Curfew is so solemn from accompanying the close of day, the twitter of the Swallow so cheerful, from its being heard in the morning, the bleating of Sheep, the call of the Goat, the lowing of Kine, so beautiful from their occurring in pastoral or romantic Situations; in short, that the greatest number of natural objects acquire their expression from their connection with particular or affecting scenes.

As, in this way, the visible qualities of objects become expressive to us of all the qualities which they possess; and besides,

in so many cases receive expression from their connection with other objects, it is extremely natural, that such qualities should form the greatest and most numerous class of the objects of Material Beauty.

I proceed to a more particular investigation of the Sublimity and Beauty of some of the most remarkable Classes of these Qualities.

SECTION I.

Of the Beauty of Colours.

THE greatest part of Colours are connected with a kind of established Imagery in our Minds, and are considered as expressive of many very pleasing and affecting Qualities.

These Associations may perhaps be included in the following Enumeration, 1*st*, Such as arise from the nature of the objects thus permanently coloured. 2*dly*, Such as arise from some analogy between certain Colours, and certain Dispositions of Mind; and 3*dly*, Such as arise from accidental connections, whether national or particular.

1. When we have been accustomed to see any object capable of exciting Emotion, distinguished by some fixed or permanent Colour, we are apt to extend to the Colour the

Qualities of the object thus coloured; and to feel from it, when separated, some degree of the same Emotion which is properly excited by the object itself. Instances of this kind are within every person's observation. White, as it is the colour of Day, is expressive to us of the Cheerfulness or Gaiety which the return of Day brings. Black, as the colour of Darkness, is expressive of Gloom and Melancholy. The Colour of the Heavens, in serene Weather, is Blue: Blue is therefore expressive to us of somewhat of the same pleasing and temperate character. Green is the colour of the Earth in Spring: It is consequently expressive to us of some of those delightful images which we associate with that Season. The colours of Vegetables and Minerals acquire, in the same manner, a kind of character from the character of the species which they distinguish. The expression of those colours, which are the signs of particular passions in the human

Countenance, and which, from this connection, derive their effect, every one is acquainted with.

2. There are many Colours which derive expression from some analogy we discover between them and certain affections of the human Mind. Soft or Strong, Mild or Bold, Gay or Gloomy, Cheerful or Solemn, &c. are terms in all Languages applied to Colours; terms obviously metaphorical, and the use of which indicates their connection with particular qualities of Mind. In the same manner, different degrees or shades of the same Colour have similar characters, as Strong, or Temperate, or Gentle, &c. In consequence of this Association, which is in truth so strong, that it is to be found among all mankind, such Colours derive a character from this resemblance, and produce in our Minds some faint degree of the same Emotion, which the qualities they express are fitted to produce.

3. Many Colours acquire character from

accidental Association. Purple, for instance, has acquired a character of Dignity, from its accidental connection with the Dress of Kings. The colours of Ermine have a similar character from the same cause. The colours in every country which distinguish the dress of Magistrates, Judges, &c. acquire dignity in the same manner. Scarlet, in this country, as the Colour which distinguishes the dress of the Army, has, in some measure, a character correspondent to its employment; and it was perhaps this Association (though unknown to himself,) that induced the blind man, mentioned by Mr Locke, to liken his notion of Scarlet to the Sound of a Trumpet. Every person will, in the same manner, probably recollect the particular colours which are pleasing to him, from their having been worn by People whom he loved, or from some other accidental Association.

In these several ways, Colours become significant to us of many interesting or af-

fecting qualities, and excite in us some degree of the Emotions which such qualities in themselves are fitted to produce. Whether some Colours may not of themselves produce agreeable Sensations, and others disagreeable Sensations, I am not anxious to dispute: but wherever Colours are felt as producing the Emotion of Beauty, that it is by means of their Expression, and not from any original fitness in the Colours themselves to produce this effect, may perhaps be obvious from the following considerations:

1. The different sentiments of Mankind, with regard to the Beauty of Colours, are inconsistent with the opinion that such qualities are beautiful in themselves. It is impossible to infer, because any particular Colour is beautiful in one country, that it will also be beautiful in another: and there are in fact many instances where the same Colour produces very different opinions of Beauty in different races of Men. Black

to us is in general an unpleasant Colour. In Spain and in Venice, it is otherwise. Yellow is to us, at least in dress, a disagreeable Colour. In China, it is the favourite Colour. White is to us extremely Beautiful. In China, on the contrary, it is extremely disagreeable. Instances of the same kind must have occurred to every person.

If we inquire, on the other hand, what is the reason of this difference of opinion, we shall uniformly find, that it arises from the different Associations which these different people have with such Colours; and that their opinion of their Beauty is permanently regulated by the nature of the Qualities of which they are expressive. Black is to us an unpleasant Colour, because it is the Colour appropriated to Mourning. In Venice and Spain, it is the Colour which distinguishes the dress of the Great. Yellow is, in China, the imperial Colour, and sacred to the Emperor and his property: it is

therefore associated with ideas of Magnificence and Royalty. Among us it has no distinct Association, and is therefore beautiful or otherwise, only according to its degree or shade. White is beautiful to us in a supreme degree, as emblematical both of Innocence and Cheerfulness. In China, on the other hand, it is the Colour appropriated to Mourning, and consequently, very far from being generally beautiful. In the same manner, wherever any peculiar Colours are permanently favourite, there will always be found some pleasing Association which the People have with that Colour, and of which they, in some measure, consider it as significant.

2. It is farther observable, that no Colours, in fact, are beautiful, but such as are expressive to us of pleasing or interesting Qualities. All Colours obviously are not beautiful: the same Colours are beautiful only when they are expressive of such qualities; and, in general, I believe it will

be found, that among all the variety of Colours we are acquainted with, those only are beautiful which have similar expressions.

The common Colours, for instance, of many indifferent things which surround us, of the Earth, of Stone, of Wood, &c. have no kind of Beauty, and are never mentioned as such. The things themselves are so indifferent to us, that they excite no kind of Emotion, and of consequence, their Colours produce no greater Emotion, as the signs of such qualities, than the qualities themselves. The Colours, in the same manner, which distinguish the ordinary dress of the common People, are never considered as Beautiful. It is the Colours only of the Dress of the Great, of the Opulent, or of distinguished professions, which are ever considered in this light. The Colours of common furniture, in the same way, are never beautiful: it is the Colours only of fashionable, or costly, or magnificent Furniture, which are ever considered as such.

It is observable, farther, that even the most beautiful Colours (or those which are expressive to us of the most pleasing Associations), cease to appear beautiful whenever they are familiar, or when the objects which they distinguish have ceased to produce their usual Emotions. The Blush of the Rose, the Blue of a serene Sky, the Green of the Spring, are Beautiful only when they are new or unfamiliar. In a short time we observe them with the same indifference, that we do the most common and unnoticed colours. That, in the same manner, our perception of their Beauty depends on the state of our own Minds, and that it is only in seasons of sensibility that we are conscious of it, is a fact which every Man knows so well from his own experience, that it would be needless to illustrate it.

It may be observed also, that no new colour is ever beautiful, until we have acquired some pleasing association with it. This is

peculiarly observable in the Article of Dress; and indeed it is the best instance of it, because, in such cases, no other circumstance intervenes by which the experiment can be influenced. Every man must have observed, that, in the great variety of new colours which the caprice of Fashion is perpetually introducing, no new colour appears at first as beautiful. We feel, on the contrary, a kind of disappointment, when we see such a colour in the dress of those who regulate the Fashions, instead of that which used to distinguish them; and even although the colour should be such, as in other subjects we consider as beautiful, our disappointment still overbalances the pleasure it might give. A few weeks, even a few days alter our opinion; as soon as it is generally adopted by those who lead the public Taste, and has become of consequence the mark of Rank and Elegance, it immediately becomes beautiful. This, it is observable, is not peculiar to co-

lours that in themselves may be agreeable; for it often happens, that the caprice of Fashion leads us to admire colours that are disagreeable, and that not only in themselves, but also from the Associations with which they are connected. A plain man would scarcely believe, that the Colours of a glass Bottle, of a dead Leaf, of Clay, &c. could ever be beautiful; yet within these few years, not only these, but some much more unpleasant colours that might be mentioned, have been fashionable and admired. As soon, however, as the Fashion changes, as soon as they whose Rank or Accomplishments give this fictitious value to the Colours they wear, think proper to desert them, so soon the Beauty of the Colour is at an end. A new colour succeeds; a new disappointment attends its first appearance; its beauty is gradually acknowledged; and the Colour which was formerly the favourite, sinks into neglect and contempt. If the Faculty by which the Beauty of Colours

is perceived, had any analogy to a Sense, it is obvious that such variations in our opinion of their Beauty could not take place.

3. When the particular Associations we have with such colours are destroyed, their Beauty is destroyed at the same time.

The different machines, instruments, &c. which minister to the convenience of Life, have in general, from the materials of which they are composed, or from the uses to which they are applied, a fixed and determinate Colour. This Colour becomes accordingly in some degree beautiful, from its being the Sign of such qualities; and although this effect is, in a great measure, lost from the frequency of observation, it is still observable upon many occasions. Change the accustomed Colour of such objects, and every man feels a kind of disappointment. This is so strong, that even if a Colour more generally beautiful is substituted, yet still our dissatisfaction is the same, and the new colour, instead of being

beautiful, becomes the reverse. Rose-colour, for instance, is a more beautiful Colour than that of Mahogany; yet if any man were to paint his doors and windows with Rose-colour, he would certainly not add to their Beauty. The Colour of a polished steel grate is agreeable, but is not in itself very beautiful. Suppose it painted green, or violet, or crimson, all of them colours much more beautiful, and the beauty of it is altogether destroyed. The Colours of Cedar, of Mahogany, of Satin-wood, are not nearly so beautiful as many other Colours that may be mentioned. There is no Colour, however, with which such woods can be painted, that would be so beautiful as the Colours of the woods themselves; because they are very valuable, and the Colours are in some measure significant to us of this value. Instances of this kind are innumerable.

There are different professions in every country, which are distinguished by dif-

ferent coloured dresses. Whatever may have led to this Appropriation, and however fanciful and extravagant it may sometimes be, after it is established, there is felt a kind of propriety in the dress; and it is strongly associated in our minds with the qualities which such professions seem to indicate. We are in some measure disappointed, therefore, when we see a professional man not in the dress of his profession; and when he is in this dress, we conceive that there is a propriety and Beauty in such a Colour. Change the Colours of these several dresses, and all this species of Beauty is destroyed. We should not only laugh at the supposition of the Army and Navy being dressed in black, and the Church and the Bar in scarlet; but we should feel also a discontent, as if these Colours had in themselves a separate Expression, and were in these cases misapplied. Even in reversing the dress of individuals of these different professions, the whole Beauty of their dress is destroy-

ed; and we are conscious of a feeling of impropriety, as if the qualities which are peculiar to such professions were necessarily connected with the dress they wear. So strong is this association even in trifles, and so naturally do Colours become expressive to us of the qualities with which we have found them generally connected.

In natural objects the same circumstance is very apparent. There are Colours perhaps more generally beautiful than those which distinguish Trees, or Rocks, or Waters, or Cottages, or Ruins, or any of the ordinary ingredients of rural scenery; yet no Colours, but the natural, could possibly be beautiful, in the imitation of such scenes; because no other colours could be expressive to us of those qualities which are the sources of our Emotion from such objects in Nature. That all the Beauty, in the same manner, of Plants or Animals, would be destroyed, if any new Colours, however generally beautiful, were substituted in the place of those

by which Nature has distinguished their different classes, and which are of consequence associated in our minds with all the qualities which they possess, is so obvious, that it is altogether unnecessary to attempt the illustration of it. That this principle applies also to the Colours of Dress, and that the same Colour is beautiful or not, as the Expression which it has is suited to the character or situation of the person who wears it, every person may satisfy himself by a little attention. As thus there is no Colour whatever, which in all situations is beautiful, and as, on the contrary, the Beauty of every Colour is destroyed, whenever the associations we have with it are dissolved, it seems reasonable to conclude, that the Beauty of such qualities arises from their Expression, and not from any original fitness in them to produce this Emotion.

4. If the Beauty of Colours arose from any original fitness in them to produce this Emotion, it is apparent, that they who are

incapable of such Perceptions, must be incapable of such Emotion. That the blind, however, may receive the same delight, from the ideas which they associate with Colours, that they do who see, is a fact which I think every one will be convinced of, who reads the poems of Dr Blacklock. No man who is not acquainted with the history of their ingenious Author, could perceive that he had the misfortune to lose his sight in early infancy. That from conversation, and from the perusal of books of poetry, it was possible for him to learn the distinguishing colours of certain objects, and to apply them with sufficient propriety in his own verses, I do not deny; but the circumstance of importance at present is this, that his poetry is full of the same sentiments, and expresses the same admiration with regard to the different visible qualities of matter, with that of Poets who have had no such defect; and that the same power is ascribed to them in producing the Emotions of Beau-

ty, and with as great accuracy with regard to particular instances, as in the compositions of those who have had the Sense of Sight in its fullest perfection. If our perception of the Beauty of Colours arose from some original fitness in such qualities to produce this Emotion, it is obvious, that the blind must be as incapable of perceiving this beauty, as of perceiving the Colours themselves; but if the Beauty of Colours arises from the associations we connect with them, this fact, in the case of Dr Blacklock, admits of a very simple solution. From reading, and from conversation, he has acquired the same associations with the Words that express such Colours, as we have with the Colours themselves; that the word White, for instance, signifies a quality in objects expressive of Cheerfulness and Innocence,—the word Purple, the quality of Majesty,—the word Black, the quality of Gloom and Melancholy, &c. In this case, it is obvious, that he may feel the same

Emotions from the use of these words, that we do from the Colours which they express; and that from the permanence of these associations in a great variety of cases, he may apply the terms with sufficient propriety, either in sublime or beautiful description. As this is in reality the case, it seems to be a very strong confirmation of the opinion, that the beauty of such qualities arises from the associations we connect with them, and not from any original or independent Beauty in the Colours themselves.

CHAPTER IV.

Of Forms.

Of all material Qualities, that which is most generally, and most naturally productive of the Emotions of Sublimity and Beauty, is Form. Other qualities may be separated from most objects, without destroying their nature; but the Form of every material object, in a great measure, constitutes its nature and essence, and cannot be destroyed, without destroying the individual subject to which it belongs. From whatever cause, therefore, the Beauty of any material object proceeds, it is natural to ascribe it to the Form, or to that quality which most intimately belongs to the object, and constitutes its essence to our senses. The common opinion, therefore, undoubtedly is,

that Forms in themselves are beautiful; that there is an original and essential Beauty in some particular Forms; and that this quality is as immediately discernible in them, as the Forms themselves.

Philosophers, however, have not been satisfied with this common opinion. The supposition of such an original and independent Beauty in Forms, has been found inconsistent with many phenomena, and some more general principle was wanted, under which the different facts upon this subject might be tolerably arranged. Many Theories accordingly have been formed to account for this species of Beauty. Some have resolved it into a sense of Proportion, and endeavoured to establish, by analogy from our other senses, certain proportions which are immediately and permanently beautiful. Others have accounted for this Beauty from the union of Uniformity and Variety. Some have supposed it to arise from the consideration of Utility. Others

have asserted, that the Beauty of Forms arises from their Commonness, and that the beautiful Form is that which is most generally met with in objects of the same kind. Mr Hogarth, in opposition to all, considers the beautiful Form as being described by lines of a particular kind, and has produced a great variety of instances in support of his opinion.

It is not my design at present, to enter into any examination of these several opinions. In all of them, I believe, there is something true to a certain extent, though I believe also, that they have arisen from a partial view of the subject, and are inadequate to account for the greater number of the phenomena.

I may be allowed, however, to observe, that of the two, the common opinion is by much the most defensible. To reduce the great variety of instances of Beauty in Forms to any single principle, seems at first sight altogether impossible; not only from

this variety, but also, in innumerable cases, from the contrary nature of the Forms, which, in fact, are Beautiful. As no Theory, besides, can possibly be maintained without some foundation in Nature, the number of Theories which have been produced upon this subject, are, in themselves an evidence, that this Beauty arises from more causes than any one of these Theories comprehends.

The principle which I have endeavoured to illustrate, with regard to the Beauty and Sublimity of Sounds and Colours, will, perhaps, be found to be equally applicable to the Beauty or Sublimity of Forms: and, as far as I can judge, is free from the objections which may be stated both to the common and the philosophical opinions. In the observations which follow, I shall therefore endeavour to shew, That the Sublimity or Beauty of Forms arises altogether from the Associations we connect with them, or the Qualities of which they are expressive

to us; and I shall endeavour to explain, with as much accuracy as I am able, the different Expressions of which Forms are susceptible, and which are the Foundation of that Sublimity and Beauty which we ascribe to them. The importance of the subject, will, I hope, be my excuse for the length, and perhaps for the tediousness of some of these illustrations.

Forms are naturally divisible into two kinds, into animated and inanimate Forms. It is the latter of these only which I propose at present to consider; as it is obviously necessary first to consider the source of the Beauty of which Form itself is capable, before we can properly ascertain that superior Beauty which arises from Animation.

With regard to inanimate Forms, the principal expressions which they have to us, seem to me to be, 1*st*, The expressions of such qualities as arise from the nature of the bodies distinguished by such Forms; and, 2*dly*, The expressions of such qualities

as arise from their being the subject or production of Art. The first of these constitutes what may be called their NATURAL Beauty; the second, what may be called their RELATIVE Beauty. There is also another source of expression in such qualities from accidental Association, and which perhaps may be termed their ACCIDENTAL Beauty.

Upon each of these sources of the Beauty of Forms, I shall offer some observations.

SECTION I.

Of the Natural Sublimity and Beauty of Forms.

PART I.

Of the Sublimity of Forms.

THE Sublimity of inanimate Forms seems to arise chiefly from two sources; 1*st*, From the nature of the objects distinguished by that Form; and, 2*dly*, From the quantity or magnitude of the Form itself. There are other circumstances in the nature of Forms, which may extend or increase this character; but I apprehend, that the two now mentioned, are the only ones which of themselves constitute Sublimity. Both of them, I believe, are productive of this effect, by being expressive to us of qualities capable of exciting very strong Emotions.

I.

1. The Forms which distinguish bodies that are connected in our minds with ideas of Danger or Power, are in general Sublime. There is scarcely any thing in inanimate Nature more remarkably so, than all those Forms which are appropriated to the instruments of War. The Forms of Cannon, Mortars, &c. have all a character of this kind. Military Ensigns, although approaching to very common and neglected Forms, partake of the same character. There are few things more Sublime than the Forms of Armour, particularly the steel Armour which was in use in the middle ages. Even the familiarity of common use does not altogether destroy this effect: the Sword, the Spear, the Javelin, the Dagger, are still sublime Forms, and enter with propriety into the sublimest descriptions either of Poetry or Painting.

2. The Forms that in general distinguish

bodies of great duration, and which of consequence express to us great Power or Strength, are in most cases sublime. In the Vegetable Kingdom, the Forms of Trees are Sublime, principally in proportion to their expression of this quality. Nothing is more Sublime than the Form of Rocks, which seem to be coëval with Creation, and which all the convulsions of Nature have not been able to destroy. The Sublimest of all the Mechanical Arts is Architecture, principally from the durableness of its productions; and these productions are in themselves Sublime, in proportion to their antiquity, or the extent of their Duration. The Gothic Castle is still more Sublime than all, because, besides the desolation of Time, it seems also to have withstood the assaults of War.

3. The Forms which distinguish bodies that are connected in our Minds with ideas of Splendour or Magnificence, are in general sublime. The Forms of the Throne, the

Sceptre, and the Diadem, approach, in fact, to very common and very neglected Forms, yet they are all sublime, from being the signs of the Splendour and Magnificence of Royalty. The triumphal Car, and the triumphal Arch, are sublime Forms, from similar Associations.

4. The Forms, in the same manner, which distinguish bodies connected in our Minds with ideas of Awe or Solemnity, are in general sublime. The Forms of Temples, although very different as Forms, have in all ages been accounted as sublime. Even the most common Forms employed in religious service, derive a character of this kind from the qualities with which they are connected. The Thunderbolt of Jupiter, the Trident of Neptune, &c. seem to have been considered by the Ancients as sublime Forms, although in themselves they are insignificant. The Forms of all those things, in the same manner, which are employed in the burial of the Dead, are strikingly

sublime. The Pall, the Hearse, the Robes of Mourners, &c. even the Plumes, which in general are so beautiful, and the Colour of which is in most cases so cheerful, are, in this situation, above all other things, powerfully Sublime.

That these, and probably other Associations of a similar kind, have an effect in bestowing Sublimity upon the Forms which generally distinguish such bodies, every person, I think, will be satisfied, both from his own experience; and from conversation. That the Sublimity of such Forms arises from the qualities which they express, and not from an original fitness in any peculiar Form to produce this Emotion, is so apparent from the single consideration of the great variety of Forms that are sublime, that I will not fatigue the reader by any farther illustration of it.

II.

The Sublimity of Forms, in many cases

also, arises from their Magnitude; and this Quality alone is often sufficient to bestow Sublimity. With Magnitude, accordingly, we have many distinct and powerful Associations.

In animal Forms, Magnitude is strongly associated in our Minds with the idea of proportionable Power or Strength, and is chiefly sublime from its expression of this Quality. Animals of great size, but feeble or harmless, are so far from being sublime, that they are in general contemptible; a fact which may easily be observed even in the opinions of Children.

In inanimate Forms, Magnitude seems to have different expressions to us, according to its different appearance or description.

Magnitude in Height, is expressive to us of Elevation, and Magnanimity. The source of this Association is so obvious, and the Association itself so natural, that such qualities of mind have, in all ages, been expressed by these Images, and such Mag-

nitudes described by terms drawn from these qualities of Mind.

Magnitude in depth is expressive to us of Danger or Terror, and from our constant experience, of images of Horror. In all countries, the popular Hell is considered as an unfathomable abyss, into which the souls of the wicked are plunged.

Magnitude in Length, is expressive to us of Vastness, and when apparently unbounded, of Infinity; that being naturally imagined to be without end, to which we can discern none. It is impossible to see a vast plain, and above all, the ocean, without this impression. In spite of the knowledge we have of the immense space between us and the fixed stars, and of the comparatively trifling distance between any two points in this globe, yet the former is not nearly so sublime as the view of the ocean without shore, or even of a great plain without bounds.

Magnitude in Breadth, is expressive to

us of Stability, of Duration, of Superiority to Destruction. Towers, Forts, Castles, &c. are sublime in consequence of this association, though very often they have no other considerable magnitude. The pyramids of Egypt are strikingly sublime in point of form, from this Expression, as well as from the real knowledge we have of their duration. We are so accustomed to judge of the stability of every thing by the proportion of its base, that terms borrowed from this material quality, are in every language appropriated to the expression of some of the sublimest conceptions we can form; to the stability of Nations, of Empires, of the Laws of Nature, of the future hopes of good men.

For the reality of these Associations, I might appeal to every man's own experience, as well as to the common language of mankind. That it is from such Expressions, or from being the sign of such qualities that Magnitude is sublime, and not

from any original fitness in the quality itself to produce this Emotion, seems to be obvious from the following considerations: 1*st*, That there is no determinate Magnitude, which is solely or peculiarly sublime, as would necessarily be the case, were Magnitude itself the cause of this Emotion. 2*dly*, That the same visible Magnitude which is sublime in one subject, is often very far from being sublime in another, and *vice versa*; and, 3*dly*, That Magnitude, according to its different appearances, has different characters of Sublimity, corresponding to the different Expressions which such appearances have; whereas if it were in itself sublime, independently of all Expression, it would in all cases have the same degree, and the same character of Sublimity.

PART II.

Of the Natural Beauty of Forms.

The most obvious definition of FORM, is that of Matter, bounded or circumscribed by Lines. As no straight line, however, can include Matter, it follows, that the only Lines which can constitute Form, must be either, 1*st*, Angular Lines, or 2*dly*, Curved or winding Lines. Every Form whatever must be composed either by one or other of these Lines, or by the Union of them.

When Forms are composed by one of these lines solely, they may be termed SIMPLE Forms. When they are composed by the Union of them, they may be termed COMPLEX Forms.

For the sake of perspicuity, I shall first consider what it is that constitutes the Beauty of Simple Forms, and then, what constitutes the Beauty of Complex Forms.

Simple Forms then may be considered as described either by angular or winding Lines. These different Forms seem to me to be connected in our minds with very different Associations, or to be expressive to us of very different Qualities. I shall beg leave to mention some of these, without pretending to a complete enumeration.

1. The greater part of those bodies in Nature, which possess Hardness, Strength, or Durability, are distinguished by angular Forms. The greater part of those bodies, on the contrary, which possess Weakness, Fragility or Delicacy, are distinguished by winding or curvilinear Forms. In the Mineral Kingdom, all Rocks, Stones, and Metals, the hardest and most durable bodies we know, assume universally angular Forms. In the Vegetable Kingdom, all strong and durable Plants are in general distinguished by similar Forms. The feebler and more delicate race of Vegetables, on the contrary, are mostly distinguished

by winding Forms. In the Animal Kingdom, in the same manner, strong and powerful Animals are generally characterized by Angular Forms: feeble and delicate Animals by Forms of the contrary kind. In consequence of this very general connection in Nature, these different Forms become expressive to us of the different qualities of Strength and Delicacy.

2. In all those bodies which have a progress, or which grow and decay within our own observation, the same character of Form is observable. In the Vegetable Kingdom, the infancy or youth of plants is, in general, distinguished by winding Forms. The infancy and youth of animals is, in the same manner, distinguished by winding or serpentine Forms; their mature and perfect age, by Forms more direct and angular. In consequence of this connection, Forms of the first kind become in such cases expressive to us of Infancy, and Tenderness,

and Delicacy; and those of the second kind, of Maturity, and Strength, and Vigour.

3. Beside these very obvious Associations, it is also to be observed, that from the Sense of Touch, angular Forms are expressive to us of Roughness, Sharpness, Harshness; winding Forms, on the contrary, of Softness, Smoothness, Delicacy, and Fineness; and this connection is so permanent, that we immediately infer the existence of these qualities, when the bodies are only perceived by the Eye. There is a very strong analogy between such qualities as perceived by the Sense of Touch, and certain qualities of mind; as in all languages such qualities are expressed by terms drawn from the perceptions of the external sense. Such Forms, therefore, when presented to the Eye, not only lead us to infer those material qualities which are perceived by the Sense of Touch, but along with these, to infer also those qualities of mind, which from analogy are signified by such quali-

ties of matter, and to feel from them some degree of that Emotion which these dispositions of mind themselves are fitted to produce. The epithets Bold, Harsh, Gentle, Delicate, are universally applied to Forms. In all languages figurative expressions of a similar kind will be found; and whoever attends either to his own feelings, or to the meaning which men in general annex to such words in applying them to Forms, will, I believe, be convinced, that the Emotion which they signify, and are intended to signify, is founded upon the associated qualities, and very different from the mere agreeable or disagreeable sensation which the material qualities alone convey.

4. The observations which I have now made, relate principally to simple curves, or to Forms in which a single curvature takes place; as the curve of the weeping Willow, of the young shoots of Trees, of the stem of the Tulip, and the Lily of the Valley. There is another species of Form,

commonly distinguished by the name of the winding or serpentine Form, in which different curves take place, or in which a continued Line winds into several Curvatures. With this Form, I apprehend we have another, and a very important Association, I mean that of Ease. From what cause this Association arises, I will not now stop to inquire; but I conceive every one must have observed, that wherever we find Vegetables, or any other delicate or attenuated body assume such a Form, we are impressed with the conviction of its being easy, agreeable to their nature, and free from force or constraint. On the contrary, when such bodies, in the line of their progress, assume angular Forms, we have a strong impression of the operation of force, of something that either prevents them from their natural direction, or that constrains them to assume an unnatural one. That winding Forms are thus expressive to us of Volition and Ease, and angular Forms of

the operation of Force or Constraint, appears from a singular circumstance in Language, *viz.* That, in general, all the former directions are expressed by verbs in the active voice; a River winds, a Vine wreathes itself about the Elm, a Flower bends, &c. while, on the other hand, all directions of the latter kind are expressed in general by the passive voice of verbs. I believe, also, I may appeal to the observation of the reader, whether from the winding of a River, of the Ivy, or of the tendrils of the Vine, he has not an impression of Ease, of Freedom, of something agreeable to the object: and whether, in the contrary Forms in such cases, he has not an impression of uneasiness, from the conviction of Force having been applied, or some obstacle having occurred, to constrain them to assume a direction unnatural to them. In general, therefore, I apprehend, that winding or serpentine Forms are expressive to us of Ease, and angular Forms of force or Constraint.

Such seem to me the principal Associations we have with the great division of Simple Forms; Winding Forms being expresive to us of Fineness, Delicacy, Ease; and angular Forms of Strength, Roughness, and in some cases of the operation of Force or Constraint.

All Forms, as perceived by the Eye, are constituted by Lines; and their Beauty is dependent upon the nature of these constituent parts. It is natural, therefore, to inquire, whether, from such Associations, any general principles can be formed, which may direct the Artist in the invention of beautiful Forms, by determining the character and expression of Lines.

Lines differ either in regard to their Nature, or their Direction.

1. Lines differ in regard to their nature according to the different degrees of their Consistence or Strength. Strong and vigorous lines are expressive to us of Strength and Stability when perpendicular; and of

some degree of harshness or roughness when horizontal, or in an oblique direction. Fine and faint Lines are expressive to us of Smoothness, Fineness, Delicacy. In any given number of straight Lines, that is always most beautiful which is finest, or which, while it preserves its continuity, has the appearance of the smallest quantity of matter employed in the formation of it. Hence, in every subject, either of Art or Nature, one of the principal causes of the Beauty of delicate outline.

2. Lines differ in their direction in two ways. They are either Even or Uneven, that is, Straight or Irregular. Irregular Lines differ again, they are either in Angles or Curves.

1. Even Lines are expressive to us of Softness and Smoothness.

2. Uneven Lines are either Angular or Winding.

Angular Lines are expressive of Harshness, Roughness, &c.

Winding Lines of Pliancy, Delicacy, Ease, &c.

The real and actual Beauty of Lines will be found to correspond to those Associations; and those are in fact the most beautiful which have the most pleasing or affecting Expression.

1. Strong and Even Lines express Strength and Smoothness. They have therefore a degree of Beauty. Fine and Even Lines express Delicacy and Smoothness. They are accordingly more beautiful than the former.

2. Strong and Angular Lines express Strength and Harshness. They are therefore very seldom beautiful. Fine and Angular Lines express Delicacy together with Roughness. They are beautiful therefore only, when the expression of Delicacy prevails over the other.

3. Strong and Winding Lines express Strength and Gentleness or Delicacy.—Their effect is mutually destroyed, and they

are accordingly indifferent, if not unpleasing. Fine and Winding Lines express Delicacy and Ease. They are accordingly peculiarly beautiful.

4. The least beautiful Lines are Strong and Angular Lines. The most Beautiful, Fine and Winding Lines.

Considering therefore Lines, in this abstracted view, and independent of the nature of the bodies which they distinguish, it seems very natural to conclude, That those Forms will be the most beautiful which are described by the most beautiful Lines, and that, of consequence, the Serpentine or winding Form must necessarily be the most beautiful. It was this view of the subject which seems to have influenced Mr Hogarth, in the opinions which he published in his Analysis of Beauty. He saw clearly, and his art afforded him continual proofs of it, that the Winding Line was of all others the most beautiful. He conceived therefore, that all Forms must be beau-

tiful in proportion to the predominance of this Line in their Composition; and his opinion falls in so much with the general observation of Mankind, that it has been very universally adopted.

If, however, the observations which I have made upon the different expressions of Forms are just; if the Winding or Serpentine Form is beautiful, not of itself, and originally, but in consequence of the Associations we connect with it, it ought to follow, that whenever this Association is destroyed, the Form should be no longer beautiful, and that wherever the same Associations are connected with the contrary Form, that Form should then be felt as Beautiful.

That this is actually the case, I shall now endeavour to shew from several very familiar illustrations.

1. If such Forms were in themselves Beautiful, it is reasonable to think that this should be expressed in Language, and that

the circumstance of the Form should be assigned as the cause of our Emotion. If, on the contrary, such Forms are beautiful from their being expressive of particular Qualities, it is equally reasonable to think, that, in common language, this expression should be assigned as the cause of the Emotion. That the latter is the case, cannot, I think, well be disputed. No Man, when he is speaking of the Beauty of any Form, unless he has some Theory in his Mind, thinks of ascribing it to the peculiar nature of the Form, or of describing its Beauty to other People, as consisting in this Form. The terms, on the contrary, which are generally used upon these occasions, are such as signify some quality of which the Form is expressive; and the epithets by which the Beauty of the Form is marked, are such as are significant of these qualities. Among these Qualities, those of Gentleness, Fineness or Delicacy, as far as I can judge, are the most remarkable, and the most general-

ly expressed in common Language. In describing the beautiful Forms of Ground, we speak of gentle Declivities, and gentle Swells. In describing the beautiful Forms of Water, we speak of a mild Current, gentle Falls, soft Windings, a tranquil Stream. In describing the beautiful Forms of the Vegetable Kingdom, we use a similar Language. The delicacy of Flowers, of Foliage, of the young Shoots of Trees and Shrubs, are expressions everywhere to be heard, and which everywhere convey the belief of Beauty in these Forms. In the same manner, in those ornamental Forms, which are the production of Art, we employ the same Language to express our opinion of their Beauty. The delicacy of a Wreath, of a Festoon, of Drapery of a Column, or of a Vase, are terms universally employed, and employed to signify the reason of our admiration of their Forms.

It may be observed also, that in comparing similar Forms, and determining with regard to their beauty, we employ the same

language; and that the reason we assign for our preference of one form to another, is, in general, from its superior expression of Fineness or Delicacy. In comparing two Vases, or two Wreaths, or two Festoons, or any other ornamental Forms, a Person unacquainted with the Theories of Philosophers, when he is asked the reason of his preference, very readily answers, because it is more delicate; but never thinks of assigning any circumstance of the Form itself, as the Foundation of his admiration. The least attention to the common language of Mankind on such subjects, will sufficiently shew how much the expression of delicacy determines the Beauty of all ornamental Forms. In describing any beautiful Form, in the same manner, to other people, we usually employ the same language, and this language is not only perfectly understood, but immediately also conveys to others the conception of the Beauty of this Form. If we were to describe the most

beautiful Vase in technical terms, and according to the distinguished characteristics of its Form, no one but an Artist would have any tolerable conception of its Beauty; but if we were simply to describe it, as peculiarly delicate in all its parts, I believe it would leave with every one the impression of the Beauty of its Form. If, however, there were any original and independent Beauty in particular Forms, the description of this Form would be alone sufficient to convey the idea of its Beauty, and the circumstance of its delicacy or Fineness would be as little able to convey this idea, as that of its Colour.

I shall only farther observe upon this subject, that the language and opinions of Children, and of common People, are inconsistent with the notion of any original or absolute Beauty in any particular Forms. Every Form is beautiful to Children that distinguishes objects which they love or take pleasure in; and so far are they, or the common People, from having any concep-

tion of the abstract Beauty of any peculiar Forms, that it is very seldom they distinguish between the Form and the subject formed, or feel any other Emotion from it, than as it is expressive to them of the qualities of the object distinguished by that Form. If, on the contrary, there were any original and independent Beauty in any peculiar Form, the preference of this Form would be early and decidedly marked, both in the language of Children, and the opinions of Mankind.

As there appears, therefore, to be no Form which is peculiarly or solely beautiful, and as in winding or curvilinear Forms, the general nature of Language seems to ascribe this Beauty to their expression of Delicacy, and not to the mere circumstance of Form itself, it appears probable, that the Beauty of such Forms arises from this expression, and not from any original fitness in such Forms to excite this Emotion.

2. When this Association is destroyed,

or when winding or curvilinear Forms cease to be expressive of Tenderness or Delicacy, I believe it will be found, that they cease also to be felt as beautiful. The origin of our Association of Delicacy with such Forms arises, as I have before observed, from our general experience that bodies of such a kind are distinguished by such Forms. This Association therefore will be destroyed, when such Forms are given to, or assumed by bodies of a contrary kind.

The greater part of beautiful Forms in Nature, are to be found in the Vegetable Kingdom, in the Forms of Flowers, of Foliage, of Shrubs, and in those assumed by the young Shoots of Trees. It is from them, accordingly, that almost all those Forms have been imitated, which have been employed by Artists for the purposes of Ornament and Elegance: and whoever will take the trouble of reviewing these different ornamental Forms, will find that they are almost invariably the Forms of such Vege-

tables, or of such parts of Vegetables, as are distinguished by the Delicacy and Tenderness of their Texture.

There are many parts, however, of the Vegetable Kingdom, which are not distinguished by this character of Delicacy. The stem of some species of Flowers, and of almost all Shrubs, the trunk and branches of Trees, are distinguished by opposite characters, and would indeed be unfit for the purposes of Vegetation if they were not. In these subjects, accordingly, the winding or serpentine Form is very far from being beautiful, as it has no longer its usual expression of Fineness or Delicacy.

In the smaller and feebler tribe of flowers, for instance, as in the Violet, the Daisy, or the Lily of the Valley, the bending of the stem constitutes a very beautiful Form, because we immediately perceive that it is the consequence of the weakness and delicacy of the flower. In the Rose, on the contrary, and the white Lily, and in the tribe

of flowering shrubs, a class of vegetables of greater strength, the same Form assumed by the stem is felt as a defect, and instead of impressing us with the idea of Delicacy, leads us to believe the operation of some force to twist it into this direction. In the young and feeble branches of such plants, however, this Form is again beautiful, when we perceive that it is the consequence of the delicacy of their texture, and of their being overpowered by the weight of the flower. In the Vine or Ivy, in the same manner, the winding of the young shoots and feebler branches, constitutes very beautiful Forms. In the direction of the stem, on the other hand, such Forms are felt as a defect, as no longer expressive of Delicacy, but of Force. In the growth of the stronger vegetables, as of Trees, where we know and expect great strength, nothing can be so far from being beautiful, as any winding or serpentine Form assumed by the trunk. The beautiful Form of such objects is of so

very different a kind, that it is in the opposite Form only that we perceive it. In the direction of the branches, the same character is expected, and a similar defect would be felt in their assuming any regularly winding or curvilinear Form. It is only when we arrive at the young shoots, and that only in their infant season, in spring, that we discover again the serpentine Form to be beautiful, because it is then only that we perceive it to be really expressive of Tenderness or Delicacy. Observations of this kind are within every person's reach, and I believe it will be found, that, in the Vegetable Kingdom, the winding or serpentine Form is no longer beautiful than while it is expressive of some degree of Delicacy or Fineness, and that it ceases to be beautiful, whenever it is assumed by bodies of a different kind.

All the different bodies which constitute the Mineral Kingdom, are distinguished by a greater degree of Hardness and Solidity,

than is to be found in any other of the productions of Nature. Such bodies, however, by different exertions of Art, may be moulded into any form we please; but the beauty of the serpentine Form, in such cases, is lost, from our consciousness of the absence of that Delicacy which in general accompanies such Forms. It is possible, for instance, to imitate the winding of the Ivy, the tendrils of the Vine, or the beautiful curves of the Rose Tree, in Iron, or in any other metal. It is possible also, to colour such imitations in so perfect a manner, as at first to deceive the spectator. If I am not mistaken, however, the moment we are undeceived, the moment we know that the subject is so different from that which characterizes such Forms in real Nature, the Beauty of the Forms is destroyed, and instead of that pleasing sentiment of Tenderness which the delicacy of the vegetables excites, a sentiment of disappointment and uneasiness succeeds: of dis-

appointment, from the absence of that delicacy which we generally infer from the appearance of such Forms; and of uneasiness, from the conviction of Force having been applied to twist the subject into so unnatural directions. If the same observation is further pursued, I think it will be found in general, that wherever the delicate Forms of the vegetable world are imitated in metal, or any other hard and durable substance, the character of the Form is lost, and that instead of that lively Emotion of Beauty, which we receive from the original Forms, we are conscious of a feeling of discontent, from the seeming impropriety of giving to such durable substances a character which does not belong to them.

There are, however, undoubtedly, cases in which curvilinear Forms in such subjects are beautiful. I apprehend, however, that this takes place only when a kind of adventitious delicacy is given to such substances, and of consequence the same character is

retained by the Form which we have generally associated with it in real Nature. This effect is in general produced by the following causes: 1*st*, When the quantity of matter is so small, as to overcome our sense of its strength or durability: and 2*dly*, When the workmanship is so excellent, as to produce an opinion of fineness or delicacy, independent of the nature of the subject upon which it is employed. In either of these cases, such Forms may be beautiful, though assumed by the hardest or most durable substances.

A Bar of Iron, for instance, or of any other metal, may be twisted by force into the most perfect spiral Form; but in such a case, the conviction of force and labour destroys altogether the beauty of the general Form. Suppose this bar lengthened, until it becomes as slender as the wires which are made use of in musical instruments, and as delicate as such wires are, and the Form becomes immediately beautiful. The same

bar may be bent by force into the Form of any given curve. In such a case the curve is not beautiful. Make the same experiment with a chain of iron, or of any other metal, which in some respects is yielding and pliant, and where we know that no force is requisite to make it assume such Forms, and the curves which it produces will be found very different in point of Beauty. The imitation of any vegetable Form, in the same manner, as the Vine, or the Rose, in any kind of metal, and as large as it is found in nature, would be very far from being beautiful. The imitation of such Forms in Miniature, and in Relief, when the character of the substance is in some measure forgot in the diminution of its quantity, may be, and very often is, extremely beautiful. The embellishments of a Vase, or of an Urn, which in general consist in the imitation of vegetable Forms, are beautiful, both from the diminution of their size, and from the delicacy of their work-

manship. If either of these circumstances were wanting, if they were massy in their substance, or imperfect in their execution, I apprehend a proportionable degree of their Beauty would be lost. In the same manner, although none of the Forms of the greater vegetables are beautiful, when imitated in their full size, many of the smaller and more delicate plants may be imitated with propriety, because such imitations suppose not only small quantities of matter, but great accuracy and perfection of art.

The same observation may be extended to the ornaments of Architecture. These ornaments being executed in a very hard and durable substance, are in fact only beautiful when they appear but as minute parts of the whole. The great constituent parts of every building require direct and angular lines, because in such parts we require the Expression of Stability and Strength. It is only in the minute and delicate parts of the work, that any kind of

ornament is attempted with propriety; and whenever such ornaments exceed in size, in their quantity of matter, or in the prominence of their Relief, that proportion which in point of lightness or delicacy we expect them to hold with respect to the whole of the building, the imitation of the most beautiful Vegetable Forms does not preserve them from the censure of clumsiness and Deformity. A ballustrade might with equal propriety be finished in waving lines, but certainly would not be beautiful. A twisted column, though affording very pleasing curves to the Eye, is acknowledged to be less beautiful than the common and regular one. In short, if the serpentine Form were the only Form of Beauty, it might with sufficient propriety be introduced into a great number of the ornamental parts of Architecture. The fact of which every person may assure himself, that such Forms are beautiful only in those parts where the quantity of matter is minute, the

Relief small, and the workmanship more exquisite, affords a strong presumption, that such Forms cease to be beautiful, when the general Association we have with them is destroyed.

It is the same limit which seems to determine the Beauty of those Forms which are executed either in wood or plaster, for the ornament of our houses. Every person must have observed in old houses, the absolute deformity of those figures with which the roofs were decorated; and in comparing them with those of modern times, will perceive that the great superiority of the latter consists in the greater delicacy of the Forms, as well as in the greater perfection of the execution. In both, flowers and foliage are imitated; but in the one in full Relief, and upon a scale sometimes greater than that of Nature. In the other, with the simplest Relief, and the finest lines, that are consistent with the preparation of the subject. The terms, accordingly, by which we ex-

press our contempt or our admiration of them, are those of Heaviness or Lightness, terms which in this subject are synonymous with Massiness or Delicacy. The subjects, however, are the same, and no other circumstances intervene, but the superior delicacy of the Forms, and the greater accuracy of the workmanship.

It would lead me into too long a digression, if I were to enter into any detail on these subjects. The hints which I have offered, may perhaps lead the reader to satisfy himself by his own observation; that the winding or curvilinear Form is beautiful only in those subjects which are distinguished by softness or delicacy of texture; that in substances of a hard and durable nature, it in general ceases to be beautiful; and that, in those cases where it is found to be beautiful, it arises from that adventitious delicacy (if I may so call it) which is produced, either when the quantity of matter employed is so small as to overcome our

opinion of its strength or durability, or when the workmanship is so excellent, as to bestow on the subject a character of Delicacy which does not properly belong to it. If in this manner it is found, that when the Association is destroyed, the curvilinear Form ceases to be beautiful, it is obvious, that this Beauty is to be ascribed, not to the Form itself, but to the quality of which it is expressive.

3. As the Beauty of the winding or curvilinear Form is thus destroyed, when those Associations of Tenderness and of Delicacy, which we in general connect with it, are dissolved, so, in the same manner, it may be observed, that all other Forms, when they have this character or expression, are considered and felt as beautiful. If there is any Form, or species of Forms, which is fitted by the constitution of our nature immediately to excite the Emotion of Beauty, and independent of all Association, it is obvious, that there never could

have been a doubt upon the subject: and that, in every class of objects, we should have been as able to point out the beautiful Form, as to point out its Colour or Smell. The fact is, however, that in no class of objects is there any such permanent Form of Beauty; and, besides the disagreement of different ages and nations in the Beauty of Forms, every man must have perceived, in the course of his experience, that every general rule on this subject is liable to innumerable exceptions, and that there is no one Form, or species of Form, which, to the exclusion of all others, demands and obtains admiration.

That angular Forms, accordingly, are also beautiful, when they are expressive of Fineness, of Tenderness, of Delicacy, or such affecting qualities, may perhaps appear from the consideration of the following instances.

In the Vegetable World, although it is generally true that winding Forms are those

that are assumed by young, or feeble, or delicate plants, yet this rule is far from being uniform, and there are many instances of similar productions being distinguished by Forms of an angular kind. There are accordingly many cases, where this Form is considered as beautiful, because it is then expressive of the same qualities which are generally expressed by Forms of the other kind. The myrtle, for instance, is generally reckoned a beautiful Form, yet the growth of its stem is perpendicular, the junction of its branches form regular and similar angles, and their direction is in straight or angular Lines. The known delicacy, however, and tenderness of the Vegetable, at least in this climate, prevails over the general expression of the Form, and gives it the same Beauty which we generally find in Forms of a contrary kind. How much more beautiful is the Rose Tree when its buds begin to blow, than afterwards when its flowers are full and in their great-

est perfection! yet in this first situation, its Form has much less winding surface, and is much more composed of straight lines and of angles, than afterwards, when the weight of the flower weighs down the feeble branches, and describes the easiest and most varied curves. The circumstance of its youth, a circumstance in all cases so affecting; the delicacy of its blossom, so well expressed by the care which nature has taken in surrounding the opening bud with leaves, prevail so much upon our Imagination, that we behold the Form itself with more delight in this situation, than afterwards, when it assumes the more general Form of delicacy. It is on a similar account that the leaves of Vegetables form a very common, and a very beautiful Decoration, though they are less distinguished by winding Lines, than almost any other part of the plants. There are an infinite number of the feebler Vegetables, and many of the common grasses, the Forms of which are

altogether distinguished by Angles and straight Lines, and where there is not a single Curvature through the whole, yet all of which are beautiful, and of which also some are imitated in different ornamental Forms with excellent effect, merely from the Fineness and Delicacy of their Texture, which is so very striking that they never fail, when we attend to them, to afford us that sentiment of interest and tenderness, which in general we receive from the opposite Form. There are few things in the Vegetable World more beautiful than the knotted and angular stem of the Balsam; merely from its singular transparency, which it is impossible to look at, without a strong impression of the Fineness and Delicacy of the Vegetable. Such observations with regard to Flowers or plants, every person has it in his power to pursue. There is not, perhaps, any individual of this Kingdom, which if it is remarkable for its Delicacy or Tenderness, is not also considered as beau-

tiful in its Form, whether that Form be winding or angular.

It deserves also to be remarked, that the Form of the great constituent parts of all Vegetables, whether strong or delicate, is nearly the same; the growth of the stem and the direction of the branches being in both alike, and in both also either in straight or in angular Lines. It is principally in the more delicate parts of the first, in the young Shoots, and in the Foliage, that they deviate from this Form, and assume winding or curvilinear directions. It is in these parts only, as I have before observed, that we discover beautiful Forms. In the class of feeble or delicate Plants, on the contrary, the forms which we neglect in the first, are regarded as beautiful, because they have that expression which is found only in the opposite forms of the other. The same form has thus a different effect from the difference of its expression; and the straight Lines and angular Junc-

tions, which are merely indifferent in the Elm and the Oak, are beheld with delight in the Plant or the Flower, when we are convinced that they are accompanied with Tenderness and delicacy.

In many of those Arts, where the Beauty of Form is chiefly consulted, the same circumstance is observable. In all of them, the Beauty of Form is principally determined by its expression of Delicacy; but as in many of them the curvilinear Form is necessarily less expressive of this quality than the angular one, it is accordingly less beautiful.

In the manufacture of Glass, for instance, the great Beauty of the Form is in proportion to this expression. Nothing is less beautiful than thick and massy Glass, which, from its quantity, seems intended to compensate for its Fragility. Nothing, on the contrary, is more generally beautiful, than thin and transparent Glass, which, from experience, we know to be the most

decisive sign of its Delicacy and Weakness. In such a manufacture, winding Lines cannot be observed without necessarily increasing the quantity and thickness of the material, and of consequence diminishing its Fineness and Transparency. Such Forms, accordingly, are less beautiful than those composed of more direct and angular Lines, which, while they admit of greater transparency, express also greater delicacy and fineness. To take a very common instance: the stalk of a wine Glass might with equal ease be fashioned into serpentine or winding Forms, as into the angular compartments in which we generally find it; yet I am much deceived if it would be nearly as beautiful, because these Lines could not admit of that apparent fineness of surface, or transparency of matter, which is obtained by its angular Divisions. In a Lustre, in the same manner, one of the most beautiful productions of this manufacture, all is angular. The Form of the Prism, one of the

most regular and angular of all Forms, obtains everywhere, the Festoons even are angular, and instead of any winding or waving Line, the whole surface is broken into a thousand little Triangles; yet I conceive no person will deny its Beauty. A Lustre, on the other hand, composed of the most beautiful Curves, and studiously varied into the most waving surface, would not be nearly so beautiful; because the necessary thickness which it would give to the Glass, would, in this case, be expressive of Strength and of Solidity, instead of Delicacy, and would diminish altogether that fine Transparency, which, in this manufacture, is immediately the sign of Tenderness and Fragility.

The same observation will apply to the manufacture of Steel, or any other of the Metals. The greatest expression of Delicacy which a hard substance like Steel can receive, is from the Fineness and Brilliancy of its surface. It demands, of consequence,

angular Forms, which, by admitting greater perfection of polish, or, at least, by displaying it better, are more beautiful than Curves, which require both greater solidity and have less brilliancy. A sword Hilt, or a watch Chain, are infinitely finer and more beautiful, when they are composed of angular Forms, than when they are composed of Curves. In the Forms which are given to Jewels, the same rule universally obtains. The delicacy of such subjects is in their Brilliancy. The only Form therefore that is beautiful in them, is that which displays it.

There is no object of this kind, in which Beauty of Form is more generally consulted, or indeed more generally found, than in the different articles of household Furniture. Such objects, by being composed of the uniform material of Wood, and that a hard and durable one, admit of little difference in point of Delicacy, but in the Quantity, or in the Form which is given to this Ma-

terial. With regard to the first, all Furniture, I apprehend, is Beautiful in proportion to the smallness of its quantity of Matter, or the Fineness or Delicacy of the parts of it. Strong and Massy Furniture is everywhere vulgar and unpleasing; and though, in point of utility, we pardon it in general use, yet wherever we expect Elegance or Beauty, we naturally look for Fineness and Delicacy in it. The actual Progress of Taste in this Article is from Strength to Delicacy. The first articles of Furniture in every country are strong and substantial. As Taste improves, and as it is found that Beauty, as well as utility, may be consulted in such subjects, their strength and solidity are gradually diminished, until at last, by successive improvement, the progress terminates in that last degree of Delicacy, and even of Fragility, which is consistent either with the nature of the Workmanship or the preservation of the Subject.

In this progress it is discovered, that

where the material which is employed is hard and durable, the greatest delicacy which can be given to the Form, is rather in the use of direct and angular Lines, than in winding and serpentine ones; and chiefly from the reason I have before mentioned, that Curves cannot be employed without a proportionable and very obvious increase of Solidity, and by these means destroying in a great measure the expression of Delicacy. Whoever will look into any of those books, which have made us acquainted with the Forms of Grecian or Roman Furniture, in their periods of cultivated Taste, will perceive, accordingly, that in scarcely any of them is the winding or serpentine Form observed; and that, on the contrary, the lightest and most beautiful of them, are almost universally distinguished by straight or angular Lines, and by the utmost possible diminution of Solidity, that is consistent either with convenience or use. What is there, for instance, more beautiful in this

kind, than the Form of the ancient Tripod, in the best periods of Roman Taste? The feet gradually lessening to the end, and converging as they approach it; the plane of the table placed, with little ornament, nearly at right angles to the feet; and the whole appearing to form an imperfect triangle, whose base is above. There is scarcely, in such a subject, a possibility of contriving a more angular Form, yet there can be none more completely beautiful: because this Form itself is more immediately expressive of Delicacy, than almost any other which could have been imagined: the slightness of the whole fabric, the decreasing proportion of the feet as they descend to the ground, the convergence of the feet themselves, and the narrowness of the base for the superstructure, expressing not only the utmost degree of Delicacy that is consistent with use, but impressing us also with the further conviction of the necessity of approaching or handling it with tender-

ness, for fear of destroying its slight Stability. From this elegant Model, accordingly, or from others, in which the same principle obtains, the greater part of the most beautiful articles of Modern Furniture are imitated. It is the Form which prevails in the construction of Chairs, Tables, Sofas, Beds, &c. and it is the Delicacy which it so well expresses, that bestows upon them the greater part of their Beauty. The application of winding or serpentine Lines, or of the more general Form of Beauty, would tend only to diminish their effect, by bestowing upon them the appearance of a greater degree of Solidity, and thus lessening, instead of increasing, the expression which is the cause of this effect.

In the course of these observations, the Reader will observe, that I have all along gone upon the supposition, that there is in reality only one species of winding or curvilinear Form; and that I have confined my observations upon their expression to

this general character of Form. Every one knows, however, that such Forms admit of great variety, and that the number of different curvatures that may be produced are almost infinite. Whoever then will take the trouble of pursuing this investigation, may, I think, easily satisfy himself, that among these, there is none uniformly and permanently beautiful; that the same Curve which is beautiful in one case, is very often not beautiful in others; and that in all cases that curvature is the most beautiful, which is most fully expressive of Delicacy or Ease in the subject which it distinguishes. As Forms of this kind differ also in the number, as well as in the nature of their curvatures, he will perceive also, that the same dependence upon their expressions continues; that the same number of curvatures or windings which are beautiful in one subject, are not beautiful in others; and that whenever in any subject the number of windings exceeds our opinion of Ease or

Facility, it from that period becomes unpleasing, and expressive only of Force or Constraint. The limits which I must prescribe to myself in these observations, oblige me, in this, as in every other part of them, to refer much of the illustration which might be produced, to the reader's own reflection and investigation.

If the observations which I have now offered on the Natural Beauty of Forms, or that Beauty which arises from the consideration of Form itself, be just, we may perhaps, without much impropriety, rest in the following conclusions on the subject.

1. That the Beauty of such Forms arises from the qualities of Fineness, Delicacy, or Ease, of which they are expressive.

2. That in every subject, that Form (whether angular or curvilinear) which is most expressive of these qualities, is the most beautiful Form. And,

3. That, in general, the curvilinear or

winding Form, as most frequently expressive of these qualities, is the most beautiful.

With regard also to those Arts which are employed in the imitation or invention of ornamental Forms, the following observations may not be without their use:

1. That wherever natural forms are imitated, those will be the most beautiful, which are most expressive of delicacy and ease.

2. That wherever new or arbitrary forms are invented, that form will be the most beautiful which is composed by the most beautiful lines, or in other words, by lines which have the most pleasing expression. And,

3. That wherever the subject of the form is of a hard or durable nature, that form will be the most beautiful, in which the smallest quantity of matter is employed, and the greatest delicacy of execution exerted.

The truth of these remarks I leave altogether to be determined by the observa-

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tion of the reader. I shall only observe, that, in the prosecution of this inquiry, it is necessary to leave out of consideration every circumstance of design, of fitness, or of utility, and to consider forms in the light only of their appearance to the eye, without any relation either to an author or an end. These relations (as will be shown afterwards) are the *foundation of a distinct* species of Beauty, to which the principles of their natural Beauty do not apply.

Although, however, I have thus been led to conclusions different from those of Mr Hogarth, yet it is but justice to a performance of uncommon ingenuity, to acknowledge, that the principle which he has endeavoured to establish in his analysis of Beauty, is perhaps of all others the justest and best founded principle which has as yet been mantained, in the investigation of the natural Beauty of forms. The instances which I have produced, and many others of the same kind, that will probably occur

to every man of reflection, seem to me very strongly to show, that the principle of the absolute Beauty of Serpentine Forms is to be considered only as a general principle, subject to many exceptions; and that not only this form is beautiful, from being the sign of particular interesting and affecting qualities, but that in fact also, forms of the contrary kind are likewise beautiful, when they are expressive of the same qualities.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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